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A HISTORY OF OXFORDSHIRE

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POPULAR COUNTY HISTORIES.

A

HISTORY OF OXFORDSHIRE.

J.

BY

J. MEADE FALKNER,

Editor of 'Murray's Handbook of Oxfordshire.'

LONDON:
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PREFACE

ALTHOUGH the present volume is essentially a sketch of the County of Oxfordshire, many of its pages are occupied with University history. This is unavoidable, as County and University are often so closely bound together that no sharp line of demarcation can be drawn between them.

It was at first intended to give full references to all authorities, but their number proved too great to allow of their entire inclusion in a popular book, and they have only been given where their omission seemed to be an injustice to living writers.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	PRE-ROMAN OXFORDSHIRE	1
II.	THE ROMAN OCCUPATION	17
III.	SAXONS AND DANES	31
IV.	THE NORMANS	52
V.	HENRY I. AND STEPHEN	62
VI.	HENRY II.	70
VII.	RICHARD I., JOHN, HENRY III., THE FRIARS	76
VIII.	THE EARLY UNIVERSITY	90
IX.	WYKEHAM AND WYCLIF	102
X.	THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY	111
XI.	THE MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITY	122
XII.	THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY	130
XIII.	THE DISSOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS HOUSES	153
XIV.	MARY: AND THE BISHOPS	172
XV.	ELIZABETH AND THE CATHOLICS	187
XVI.	JAMES I.	205
XVII.	THE CIVIL WAR	222
XVIII.	THE CIVIL WAR AND THE COMMONWEALTH	239
XIX.	THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE VISITORS	255
XX.	THE RESTORATION: JAMES II.	267
XXI.	THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	283
XXII.	CONCLUSION	313

HISTORY OF OXFORDSHIRE

CHAPTER I.

PRE-ROMAN OXFORDSHIRE.

THE county of Oxford is exceedingly irregular in its form. At its greatest length, taking a line from Claydon in the north to Caversham in the south, it measures some fifty miles, and north of the city of Oxford it has a breadth for the most part of from twenty to thirty miles. At Oxford itself however, it suddenly narrows down, being only seven miles across from Iffley to Waterperry, and at no point below the city can it boast of a greater breadth than twelve miles.

The shire probably became crystallized in its present shape somewhere in the first half of the tenth century, and any attempt to discover the principles which guided the demarcation may be conveniently postponed till the discussion of that period. There are however, certain natural features in the district which are eminently calculated to form frontier lines, and which no doubt lent themselves to that purpose from the earliest times. Such are the wooded steeps of the Chiltern Hills on the south-east, the river Thames along the whole of the south side, and the grand escarpment of Edgehill from Chastleton to Mollington on the north-west. In the two latter instances, at least, it is likely that the limits of modern Oxfordshire correspond more or less nearly with very early tribal divisions.

To anyone studying the natural features of the district, the most characteristic must seem the abundance of water. If a map of the county is taken, and the course of all rivers and streams marked on it in some bold colour, the result is quite astonishing.

The ramification of the numerous rivers is so great as to cover the whole district with a network of watercourses, except in the two small portions of tableland lying at the extreme north and south of the shire.

'That Oxfordshire is the best water'd County in England, though I dare not with too much confidence assert, yet am induced to believe there are few better,' says Plot* in his 'Natural History.' The ingenious doctor was well within the mark in this statement, at least; and in regard to the abundance of its streams Oxfordshire stands first of English counties. Beside the great river which forms its southern boundary, it has within its borders four others of considerable importance, the Cherwell, Evenlode, Windrush, and Thame—all of them tributaries of the Thames. Nor is this all; we have the Glyme, the Shill, the Dorne, the Ray, and a host of others too numerous to mention, which help to make up the 'three score and ten at least, of an inferior rank, beside smaller brooks not worthy notice.' All these Dr. Plot goes on to say are 'of so quick a stream, free from stagnation, and so clear . . . that few (if any) vappid and stinking exhalations can ascend from them to corrupt the *Air*. And as for standing Pools, Marish or Boggy grounds, the parents of *Agues*, *Coughs*, *Catarrhs*, they are fewest here of any place to be found.' But here perhaps, partiality for his theme has somewhat outrun his judgment, for the rivers of Oxfordshire have as a rule, the depth, weeds, and clouded appearance that form the characteristic of slow-moving streams. It was, indeed, a vexed point among etymologists of a past school whether the Windrush derived its appellation from its winding among the rushes, or from its rushing like the wind; but if the question were to be settled by the actual characteristics of the stream, the supporters of the first theory would win the day. The Evenlode and the Cherwell partake of the same nature.

Abundant as are the waters of Oxfordshire to-day, it may easily be imagined that they were still more abundant in very early times. It is well known that extensive forests exercise a climatic influence in rendering the atmosphere more humid and the rainfall more copious; and Oxfordshire was more than usually wooded. The Thames had no locks to maintain artificial depth, but the volume of water in its bed was far greater, and the absence of any means of regulating the current must have produced frequent floods along its banks; and this was also the case with the Cherwell, Windrush, and Evenlode.

The second great natural feature of the district was the wide extent of its woods. Even so late as the seventeenth century Camden was struck by the Oxfordshire woods, and draws especial

* See *post*, p. 269.

attention to them; and Plot, writing in 1677, laments their disappearance 'in the late unhappy wars.' This destruction, however, was but partial, for it is only in comparatively recent years that Wychwood has been disafforested, and large tracts of the Chiltern woods brought under cultivation.

In the times anterior to the Roman invasion, the whole county, with the exception of the rank meadows in the river valleys, the great marsh of Otmoor, and some of the barren uplands, was probably covered with woods more or less dense. On the south-east ran the impenetrable beech-woods that clothed the chalk steeps of the Chilterns. On the west was Wychwood, covering all the district by Witney, Burford, and Charlbury. On the east by Bicester was Bernwood, and a little further north the vaster extent of Whittlebury Forest. Along the southern side of Otmoor ran the woods of Boarstall, Shabbington, and Beckley, which afterwards became a royal hunting-ground. Except for such insignificant clearings as the hands of the British settlers had made, the district of Oxfordshire must have presented one continuous sea of wood, out of which a barrow-studded down or camp-crowned hilltop rose here and there like an island. Through these great woods threaded the countless streams, now parched and low in a long drought, now swollen and flooding the valley meadows, now blocked with fallen trees, and forming marshes with their diverted flow. The climate differed probably very little from that which we enjoy to-day, except that the forest, while it tempered the winter frosts, brought more frequent rain, rendered the air damper, fogs and steaming vapours more common, and the sky more often cloudy.

Such being the state of Oxfordshire in the last century before Christ, let us consider who the people were who inhabited it. At the time of the Roman invasion the British Isles were possessed almost entirely by the Celtic branch of that great national group called Aryan. Modern theories point to the original pre-Celtic inhabitants of these islands having been driven westward and northward, and gradually dispossessed by Celtic invaders from the mainland, of a particular family which is often known as Gaelic. These Gaels were afterwards displaced and driven, in their turn, west and north by a second influx of Celtic invaders of the family called Brithonic or British. It is of course quite impossible to fix any date for these invasions and occupations. Not only are they infinitely removed from any historic period, but it is probable that each change was less a definite event than a gradual process extended over a great many years. It is certain however, that when the Romans came they found nearly the whole of England,

and the South of Scotland in the hands of the Britons. The Gaels had been relegated to Cornwall, to Wales, Anglesea, and the North of Scotland; and the district in which Oxfordshire is now included had most certainly been in the possession of the Celtic Britons for centuries.

Contemporary authorities are, as may be presumed, scanty enough. Pytheas, a Greek navigator and geographer of Marseilles (*floruit circa* 320–300 B.C.), is the first to lift the curtain on the British Isles. Prompted probably by the spirit of mercantile enterprise, but possibly only by the restless activity of the Greek mind, he fitted out a naval expedition and sailed from Marseilles through the Straits of Gibraltar on the track of the tin and amber trade. The estimate of his voyage which considers that he coasted from Cadiz to Calais, and thence up the east coast of England and some part of Scotland, is likely to be as near the truth as any other. Some hold that he did much more, and others that he did much less, and, in fact, nothing at all, and that his narrative is mythical. Of his own books nothing remains, but Eratosthenes, Strabo, and others, have quoted him with such freedom that we can gather something of his story.* He was, without doubt, a good astronomer, a careful observer, and an intrepid discoverer. When he speaks of Britain being over 4,000 miles in circumference, of Thule, where sea and air mingled in a substance like a jelly-fish, barring all further progress, and where the summer brought endless day and winter everlasting night, he is exaggerating; but even so a glimmer of truth breaks through, and we can trace the effect of packing ice, of driving Scotch sea-mists, and hearsay evidence of Arctic phenomena on the Mediterranean mind. It is with his reports of the civilization then obtaining in South Britain that we are most concerned. If his observations were accurate (and it would be equally absurd either to reject them altogether as unworthy of credence, or to insist on their accuracy in detail), they point to a state of civilization far higher than is commonly attributed to that early date. The most interesting of his statements (frequently quoted) are that the natives drank a fermented liquor made of corn and honey, and thrashed their corn in large covered barns. This last was due, he says, to the inclemency of the climate, which prevented the use of the open threshing-floors with which he was acquainted in South Europe. He also notes that as he progressed further North the cultivation of grain ceased, a fact which tallies with the theory

* Eratosthenes accepted his statements *in toto*. Strabo is never tired of impugning him, and, for the purpose of exposing his inaccuracies, gives long quotations which the loss of the original has made valuable.

that the northern parts of the island were in the possession of a different and less civilized people.

After Pytheas we know nothing of Britain from documentary 'evidence' for two centuries. A generation before the death of Cæsar, perhaps about 80 B.C., Posidonius, philosopher and polymath, visited the island. He is chiefly known as a popularizer of Stoicism at Rome, and as one of Cicero's teachers, for whom his pupil entertained a warm regard. His works, like those of Pytheas, have perished; but in his case also another author has acquainted us with what Posidonius probably narrated of British civilization. Diodorus Siculus, a voluminous and uncritical historian, who wrote in the time of Augustus, seems to have been quoting Posidonius when he speaks of the Britons dwelling in mean huts, and stowing their grain in pits, perhaps a forecast of the system of ensilage, but probably to secure it from pillage. Though not absolutely incompatible with Pytheas' account of harvest operations, this is scarcely what we should have expected; but it is possible that Pytheas and Posidonius referred to different districts.

To these, the chief authorities as regards Britain before the coming of Cæsar, it is well perhaps to add Strabo, although he compiled his general geography as late as between B.C. 10 and A.D. 20. He probably wrote at Rome, but being steeped in Alexandrinism, seems to have drawn his views from older Greek sources, and to have culpably neglected more accurate Roman information which must have been readily accessible to him, so that we may take his account as referring to a period antecedent to that at which he actually wrote. In his third book he refers to the Cassiterides,* or tin islands, but not as being close to Britain; and in his fourth book he has a very weak account of Britain, in which he introduces the well-known story of cannibalism and community of wives prevailing in Ireland. Though it is probable that both these stories were untrue, yet we may see in them another indication that Ireland, like the extreme West of England, Wales, and North Scotland, was inhabited by a different race.

Such is the documentary evidence as regards early British civilization, and it is certainly shadowy and unsatisfactory enough. Fortunately, we are able to supplement it very considerably by an examination of the actual remains which the inhabitants of those times have left behind them, such as earthworks, roads,

* The identification of the Cassiterides has been a crux for centuries. A consensus of modern writers is in favour of their being the Scilly Isles, but there is much to be said for the view which places them off Vigo. *Cf.* Elton's 'Origins of English History,' p. 17.

sepulchral monuments, and the vast variety of weapons, tools, and ornaments which have been found in graves, in hoards, or scattered over the country. It would be entirely beyond the scope of a sketch like this to attempt any general description or analysis of these remains, and we can only recapitulate some of the main conclusions at which those who have studied the matter have arrived. Everything points to the civilization of the southern parts of England having reached before the advent of Cæsar a stage far more advanced than is usually supposed. The stone periods, palæolithic and neolithic, had passed away for ages; the bronze period, with its exquisite manufactures, had at length, after a very long duration, given way to iron. Any attempt to arrive at a definite date in such matters is liable to mislead, but if a guess may be hazarded it is not improbable that iron came into general use in Britain somewhere between 300 and 200 B.C. The nomadic period of life had developed into that of settlement, grain was freely grown, and the early Briton possessed great herds of sheep and cattle. He knew also something of the mineral resources of his country, and the virgin wealth of Cornwall yielded tin prodigally to his simple stream working.

It is probable that there were clustered along the south-east and south shores of England and in the south midlands, ten or a dozen tribes more or less powerful, and occupying each of them a definite tract of land more or less extensive. The hereditary principle of government prevailed,* and from time to time, no doubt, some more than usually powerful tribe-ruler would extend his suzerainty over neighbouring tribes. Frontiers were liable to constant alteration as a result of fighting, which went on pretty generally on the borders.

Of the British tribes at this period the most civilized were probably those along the south coast. The stories of direct intercourse and commerce of Phœnicians or Greek colonists with Britain have always exercised a curious fascination, and need not be rejected as a record of isolated and rare experiences. But they are to be very largely discounted if it is sought to deduce from them any regular system of direct trade between the Mediterranean ports and Britain. The difficulty of navigation and the dangers of 'the Bay' were far too serious to admit of any systematic seafaring commerce of this kind, and there is no question that whatever communication was kept up with the mainland took place at the south-east extremity of Britain. Here the narrow straits (where the opposite coast is so frequently visible) afforded easy

* See an ingenious argument on this subject in Greenwell's 'British Barrows.'

means of access, and continual intercourse took place. How extensive this intercourse was we are enabled to gather from Cæsar's 'Commentaries,' where he speaks of the Gauls seeking auxiliary forces from Britain, and from other passages in his narrative, which state that the peoples on different sides of the Channel were sometimes actually subject to the same prince. Across the Straits of Dover filtered from Gaul to Britain that civilization which was gradually advancing from east to west across Europe. There is no reason to doubt that the civilization of the south-east British tribes was in the last century B.C. on a par in all practical respects with that of their Gallic brethren. The system of government was hereditary kingship. There were already towns of a certain importance. Men were well skilled in the arts of weaving and pottery. The iron and tin mines were renowned, their skill in metallurgy* was remarkable, and some of their weapons, implements, and ornaments possess a peculiar grace. Their houses were probably low and of wattlework; they lived by agriculture and cattle-farming rather than by hunting; but they were brave and dogged fighters. They were in short as different as it is possible to imagine from the naked woad-stained savage, living in holes and caves, and subsisting precariously by hunting, who plays so large a rôle in conventional early British history.

Such was the state of the south-eastern tribes running along the coast, perhaps from Kent to Dorset. As the interior of the island was reached, culture perhaps diminished, and although Strabo's stories of cannibalism and community of wives may be exaggerated, it is probable that in Wales, the North of England, and especially in Ireland and Scotland, the tide-mark of civilization stood at a lower level.

On the fringe of the south-eastern civilization lay the district which includes modern Oxfordshire. An examination of the sepulchral barrows and other indications warrant the belief that the tribes inhabiting Wiltshire and Berkshire were in a more advanced state of progress than most of their neighbours. Not only does the more common occurrence of tumuli and earthworks point to a larger population, but the variety of objects found in the barrows, their richness and perfection, and especially the greater frequency of gold, all show the wealthy status of the ancient inhabitants. In Oxfordshire the civilization, though advanced, was probably not quite so high as that of Wilts, Berks

* They were especially clever in the application of enamel to bronze. The beauty of some of the designs is very great, and the Romans borrowed the art of enamelling from them.

and the sea-coast counties. The conditions affecting the populousness of any given district were entirely different at that time to those which regulate it to-day. The great difficulty of clearing forests with the inadequate means then at command effectually forbade any considerable population of a forest district. Men sought the down country, the valley meadows, the wolds, or any heights where tolerable clearness from wood afforded facility for settlement.

Hence the traces of early inhabitants in Oxfordshire are very much fewer, as we should expect, than those in the counties adjoining it on the south. The barrows are not frequent, and earthworks are comparatively rare in the area of Oxfordshire proper, although no doubt cultivation is responsible for the total disappearance of a good many barrows. Thus the fine barrow at Souldern was levelled in 1845.

It is probable that at the time of, and for a long period before, the first Roman invasion in B.C. 55, Oxfordshire formed part of the territory of a tribe whose dominions at one time reached to the Severn on the west and the Chilterns on the east, and were bounded on the north by the Avon, and on the south by the Bath Avon and the Thames. This people, whose capital, according to Ptolemy, was Cirencester (Corinium), bore some name which was afterwards Latinized into Dobunni or Dobuni. It is idle to guess what the British form of the name may have been, or to speculate on its derivation. Camden has derived it from some supposed Celtic root *dfn*, and attached to it the meaning of dwellers on the low ground, or 'marshmen.' How fruitless such guesswork is may be gathered from the fact that another ancient historian* writes the word with delightful impartiality, 'Boduni.' There is, indeed, a good deal to be said for this variation, but custom supports us on the whole in referring to the early inhabitants of the district as Dobuni.

The Dobuni, though considerably advanced† in the race of

* *μέρος τι τῶν βοδούνων ὧν ἐπῆρχον* Κατουελλανοὶ *ὄντες*.—Dion. Cass., lx. 20.

† British civilization was so far advanced by the end of the third century before Christ that it is probable that the tribes in the south-east of the island began to coin gold somewhere between the years 200 to 150 B.C. About 350 B.C. Philip II. of Macedon, who had recently acquired the gold-mines of Philippi, began that wholesale coinage which flooded East Europe with his money, and made his gold stater a model for barbarian imitators. The form of Philip's stater is sufficiently familiar; it is a handsome gold piece, bearing on the obverse the young laurelled head of Apollo, Ares, or Heracles, and on the reverse a charioteer driving a biga with Philip's name at the base. This coin was first imitated by the Pannonian and Dalmatian States, and such imitations are close enough to the original. Thence the progress of coinage moved gradually up the Danube, through Switzerland, on through Gaul, and at length filtered slowly into Britain by the crossing at the south-east of the

civilization, had scarcely achieved the same progress as some of the inhabitants of the coast; and in the same way, though sufficiently powerful, they were not perhaps among the very foremost of the British tribes. The Severn and the Thames strengthened their position very much on the west and south respectively, but on the east and north-east they had to deal with powerful and aggressive neighbours. These were the Catuvelauni, familiar to readers of Tennyson as the Catyeuchlanians, whose territory reached north from the Thames to the Wash.

island. It is very curious and interesting to trace the gradual degradation of Philip's image and superscription. At an early date, and in countries near the original source of the stater, the imitations are fairly exact; but as years go on, and in countries lying further west, the head of Apollo is supplanted, in a process of gradual change, by the *coiffure*, and this in turn becomes a mere hieroglyphic. The charioteer too, and the biga disappear, and the horse, though the most constant element, degenerates into forms so strange and rudimentary as to be only identifiable after examination of examples showing the intermediate stages of the transition. The famous passage in Cæsar's 'Commentaries,'* where he says that the inhabitants of Britain 'use bronze or iron rings checked to a certain weight instead of money,' has been constantly adduced as a proof that any British coinage is posterior to Cæsar's date. But it is sufficient here to state that the passage is notoriously corrupt, that any importance attached to it has been exaggerated, and that, if ever written as it now stands, facts prove it to be unfounded. It is possible, though not probable, that the earliest British coinage was confined to gold. The practice of coining money undoubtedly began in the south-east of the island, spreading thence along the sea-coast as far as Dorset, and also to some of the adjacent inland districts. The Dobunians of Oxfordshire were probably one of the latest of the tribes to coin money of their own. At first the British coins bear no lettering, but about 50 B.C. inscriptions began to be placed upon them, and there are many instances of names such as Tincommios, Tasciovanus and Cunobelinus, whose date can be fixed with a fair approximation to accuracy. Shortly after Cæsar's invasion the Romanizing influence of the Gallic colonies makes itself apparent in the coins, and they are entirely supplanted by the imperial money. The coinage of the Dobuni is late in date, and the 'metal of which they are made is extremely base, so much so that some of the gold coins have more the appearance of being of brass or copper.'† It is supposed that the series of British coins bearing the inscription BODUOC are to be referred to this district. BODUOC was formerly interpreted as the superscription of BOADICEA, and the coins were supposed to be struck by her; but it is certain that they have no connection with that aggrieved princess, and the word BODUOC has not improbably some connection with the root of *Boduni*, a variant of *Dobuni*. On the obverse they bear the plain inscription BODUOC, or such portion of it as the die found room for on the coin, and on the reverse is the conventional horse. There is a good specimen in the Ashmolean Collection. It is worth noting here that coins of the Catuvelaunian Cunobeline have been found as far west as Oxfordshire. In the index of Dr. Evans' great book is a fairly extensive, though of course not complete, list of the places in Oxfordshire where British money has been discovered,‡ and among the coins mentioned no less than nine bear Cunobelin's inscription.

* V. 12. † Evans, 'Ancient British Coins,' p. 133.

‡ Aston Rowant, Bourton Magna, Chipping Norton, Churchill, Cowley, Dorchester, Garsington, Little Milton, Oxford, Stanlake, Swalcliffe, Whittenham Hills, Wood Eaton.

There was continual fighting on the north-east frontier, and the Catuvelauni, in the period after Cæsar's invasion, not only encroached on the Dobunian territory, and brought a considerable part of it definitely under their rule, but also established a practical supremacy in South Britain. It is uncertain how far west they carried their boundary-line. Some think as far as the Chilterns, and others that they conquered the whole county of Oxford and made the line of Edgehill their west march. In any case it is likely that the boundary lines of tribal supremacy were continually changing. On the south of the Dobuni lay another powerful tribe, the Atrebates, who held what is now Berkshire. Between the Dobuni and the Atrebates the Thames formed a natural boundary, but it was one that could be crossed, and the great number of bronze implements found in its bed tells a tale of continual fighting at fords.

The population of Oxfordshire was sparse, as has been said, owing to its being covered so largely with forest. What inhabitants there were lived principally in the valleys of the streams and on the upland at the north of the county. The evidence of the barrows is conclusive in showing that these early people were not great hunters, as is commonly supposed, but devoted themselves rather to growing wheat and pasturing their herds of sheep and cattle.

Along the east and south-east of the county ran, and still runs, the old British road known as the Icknield Way. That great trackway leading from Icklington, in Suffolk, right across England to the west, possibly to Bath, enters Oxfordshire in its course near Chinnor. Here it divides into an upper and a lower way, and, skirting the Chiltern steeps, crosses the Thames at Streatley, and so leaves the county. To this road Dr. Plot refers as being called indifferently in his day (1677) Icknill, Acknill, Hackney, or Hackington. But its more correct spelling is probably Icknield, as it contains undoubtedly the same root as is found in the name Iceni, the tribe to whose county it led. Dr. Guest, in his 'Origines Celticæ,' gives a delightful description of this 'old trackway with its boundless views and long stretches of springy turf-land.' In its passages, however, through Oxfordshire, it exhibits no very marked feature, though directly after crossing the Thames into Berkshire there are found along its course the great series of hill-forts comprising Blewberry, Skootchamfly (Cwichelms-hlœwe), Letcombe, Uffington, and Liddington. These entrenchments, crowning the top of a commanding down, seem to indicate an old tribal frontier line, and may have been cast up by the inhabitants of the district which is now Berkshire,

to keep back their neighbours to the north. Some have seen in them the north boundary of the Atrebates before they had extended their dominion to the Thames, or even across it, as there is reason to believe they did at a later date. From the ridge of downs on which these fortresses are situated at irregular intervals, the eye wanders far across the valley of the Thames and over the great plains at the south-east of Oxfordshire. In the midst of this sea-like plain rise two singular round hills. They are completely isolated, with a shallow valley between them. On the map they are known as Wittenham Clumps; in the vernacular of the country a more homely appellation recalls the Breasts of Sheba in 'King Solomon's Mines.' Leland says that in his day the fortified hill was called Sinodun, and there is reason to suppose that this was its British title. Both summits are crowned with clumps of trees, and the position they occupy is singularly commanding. They lie on the Berkshire side in close proximity to the Thames, which skirts their base, and travellers by river, road, or even rail, cannot help being struck by their 'ubiquitousness'; it seems impossible to get away from them. On the higher of the two summits, which has an elevation of some 250 feet, is a fine British earthwork. There is a triple line of entrenchment with vallum and fossæ complete all the way round, the latter of considerable depth. The area enclosed is important, the circumference on the outside being over a mile. The lower of the two hills shows no signs of fortification, though it has on it a tumulus known as Brightwell Barrow.

Facing these clumps on the Oxfordshire side of the river (just outside the village of Dorchester) another earthwork has been flung up. Here a broad U-shaped promontory of land (formed by a bend in the Thames and the junction with it of the river Thame) has been utilized as a fortress by drawing a line of bold entrenchment across the narrowest part. This earthwork is known in the neighbourhood as Dyke Hills, and consists of a double vallum* with a trench in the middle. This trench was made, no doubt, to serve as a moat by the river being diverted into it, and Skelton's illustration shows it full of water.

The situation is remarkable. The two isolated and tree-crowned hills rising abruptly out of the plains, the river sweeping broadly at their base, the strange, straight entrenchment on the Oxfordshire side, and the village of Dorchester, with the long red roofs of its abbey church, all combine to form a striking picture. No one can say who built either the hill-fort or the river-fort. It

* Partly destroyed in 1870 by a kind-hearted farmer, who employed his men in digging it down during a severe winter.

is possible that Sinodun was an outpost of the Atrebates built to command some river-passage and to prevent the Oxfordshire inhabitants from harrying the plains on the other bank. The origin of the river-fort is equally problematic. It was at one time supposed to be of Roman construction, and to have been flung up against Sinodun, but this theory is untenable; it may have been a frontier fortification cast up by the Dobuni or Catuvelauni as an answer to the Atrebat stronghold on the hill.

As the line of Berkshire downs and the river Thames formed two natural frontier lines on the south, and the Chiltern steeps and woods another on the east, so on the west the escarpment of Edgehill, where the great tableland of North Oxfordshire falls sharply to the plains of Warwick, offered another well-marked tribal limit. It was perhaps used as a rampart against the more western tribes by the Dobuni before they pushed their dominions as far as the Severn, and afterwards by the Catuvelauni against the Dobunians themselves, when Catuvelaunian inroads had annexed Oxfordshire to the eastern tribe's territory. The name Edgehill is wonderfully expressive of the edge of the tableland, terminating abruptly almost like a wall; and there is a sublimity in the situation and in the extraordinary view, not to be forgotten by any who have once seen it. From the top the eye wanders over the endless plains of 'leafy' Warwickshire, which lie below like an open map, and hence, on a clear sunny day, it is said that the heights of Malvern and the Wrekin can be distinguished.

It is on this tableland terminating in Edgehill that the most important vestiges of the early inhabitants are to be seen in Oxfordshire. From Cornwell to Warmington, and right along the top of the hills, ran an early trackway. On this road, which passes the famous Rollright circle, traces of several tumuli are still visible, and many more known to have existed have disappeared. In the near vicinity on the east are the earthworks of Nadbury, Madmarston, Tadmarton, and Ilbury. Mr. Beesley, in his 'History of Banbury,' has a picturesque description of these camps. From Nadbury, the most northerly, to Ilbury, the most southerly, is a distance of eleven miles, and they can all be seen from Crouch Hill, an eminence about one mile south-west of Banbury, on the tree-covered top of which are traces of early works. The plough has been fatal to earthworks of all kinds in Oxfordshire, and it is probable that a great number of tumuli and smaller camps have entirely disappeared before the high cultivation which rules in the county. 'None of the traces of these camps can be expected to remain long in the state in which they are at present,' says Mr. Beesley;

and the half-century that has passed since this was written has amply justified his fears.

Besides these fortifications, there are earthworks of an early date at 'Round Castle,' between Begbroke and Woodstock, and a camp near Ditchley. There is a British village* (with the usual circular diggings) near Stanlake, and there are tumuli at Rollright, at Middleton, Wooton, Lyneham, and several on and near the Akeman Street,† the dates of which are uncertain. Among these the finest is the well-known Asthall Barrow. It lies on the top of the down, a remarkable tree-covered landmark, and is passed on the north by the modern highroad between Witney and Burford, about two and half miles from the latter.

Before quitting the subject of earthworks, mention may be made of two low ramparts, or valla, called Grimsdikes.‡ One of these runs from Charlbury to Wooton (that is, from the Evenlode to the Glyme), and is easiest to trace as it emerges from Ditchley Park on the east. The other is south of Bensington, and may be supposed from its remains to have reached from the Thames at Newnham Murren, or Mongewell, to the foot of the Chilterns at Nuffield.

A boundary-ditch near Witney, in the meadows towards Ducklington, is known to-day as Emm's Ditch. The name is generally supposed to commemorate an exploit of Emma, Queen of Ethelred and Canute. She had been accused of criminal intimacy with her guardian, Alwyn, Bishop of Winchester, but purged herself from the slander by walking barefoot and unhurt over nine red-hot ploughshares. As a thank-offering, Witney and twenty other manors were made over by the Crown to the See of Winchester, and Emm's Ditch is supposed to mark the

* The Stanlake 'village' was discovered by digging up thirteen 'fairy rings in 1857, and within a short distance of it are three ancient burial-places—Cokethorp, Yelford and Brighthampton.

† Some in Wychwood Forest came into notice at the disafforestation.

‡ There are no less than twenty-two such earth ramparts in England, known as Grimsdikes, so that it must have been a name of common application. Dr. Stukeley derived the title from the A.S. *grime*, a witch, considering 'the term Grimsdike equivalent to "witches' work," for the vulgar generally think these extraordinary works made by help of the devil'; but later authorities hold that the same root is to be traced in it as appears in the German *grenze*, and that the proper meaning is therefore a frontier line. It is probable that such works are for the most part originally ramparts set up for defence by one tribe against another in pre-Roman times, but that the Saxons, finding them handy for the purpose, used them afterwards as lines of division for certain districts without any military significance, and called them Grimsdikes, or frontier lines. The name seems to have been applied even to the great work of Antoninus, which crossed the upper isthmus from the Firth of Forth to the Clyde, and Dr. Guest attributed to this source the Scotch name of Graeme or Graham, explaining it as a dweller on the Grimsdike.

limit of the possessions at Witney which the Queen's valour had gained for the Church. But it is not improbable that 'Emm's' is in this instance a corruption of 'Grimms,' and that in Emm's Ditch we have a third instance of a Grimms' dyke in Oxfordshire. Another boundary mound and ditch run from the Akeman Street where it passes Tackley Park as far as the north-west corner of Middleton Park, and are known as Ashbank, Wattlebank, or Avesditch, and by country-folk as Goblin's Bank.

Oxfordshire adds an important item to the list of ancient British stone monuments. On the old trackway running along the top of Edgehill, of which mention has already been made, lies the celebrated Rollright circle. It is situated on the high ground about three miles north from Chipping Norton. Here in a fine open position, commanding wide views in all directions, stands the ring of some sixty 'degraded' stones and fragments of stones, which convey the unmistakable impression of having been once parts of a continuous circular edge or wall. It is on a scale much less than that of the giant structures of Stonehenge and Avebury, the diameter being only 105 feet; but it is classed as the third circle now remaining in England, and is interesting from the large number of the stones which compose it. In a manuscript, 'De Mirabilibus Britanniæ,' at Cambridge, attributed to Bede, it is magnified into the second wonder of the kingdom; but the document was probably composed by some monk of Oxfordshire extraction, who wished to exalt his native county. It was much more perfect, even within comparatively recent times, than we see it now, both as to the number of the stones, their arrangement, and individual state. The area is planted with a desolate clump of fir-trees, and the impression produced is at first, one of the insignificance and small size of the stones surrounding it. In a well-known view in Camden's 'Britannia' (dated 1607, but made, he says, much earlier) the stones are represented as being very much bigger than any which now exist at the spot. It is true the view is probably fanciful and exaggerated, but figures are introduced especially to gauge the stones, and there is some reason to believe that the circle has been very seriously damaged since that period. Dr. Stukeley speaks of them as 'corroded, like worm-eaten wood, by the harsh jaws of Time, and that much more than Stonehenge.' And the description suits them admirably to-day. Like Avebury, Rollright has served as a quarry for the neighbourhood. About 100 yards north, in a field on the other side of the road, stands one great isolated stone 8 feet 6 inches in height, and about 5 feet in breath; and a quarter of a mile east a huddled group of five stones (of which the highest is near 11 feet) are what is left of a

ruined cromlech. On the west once stood another isolated stone, which was removed a century or more ago for road-mending or some similar purpose.* The strange and solemn nature of the scene impressed the minds of past ages, and popular tradition has located at Rollright a legend which appears in kindred form in other places in England. There was a powerful chieftain who here held sway, and who, relying on a prophecy that if he could once come within sight of Long Compton (a village lying deep in the hollow on the Warwick side) he should become King of England, had mustered an army and led them thus far on his way. While he was repeating the oracle,

> 'If Long Compton I can see,
> King of England I shall be,'

the ubiquitous Mother Shipton (the troublesome Elijah of these Ahabs) sprang up on the down before him, and with the spell,

> 'Move no more: stand fast stone;
> King of England thou shalt be none,'

changed him and his forces in an instant into stone. The isolated stone on the Warwickshire frontier is the proud monarch, and is known to this day as the King Stone. Fancy sees in it a loose-robed figure, with garments blown in the wind and a mantle over the head. The circle is his army, and the cromlech, called the Whispering Knights, are five of his chieftains, who were hatching a plot against him at the moment when the word of power was spoken. It is curious that while there is a wide view from this spot in every other direction, Long Compton, though so near, remains completely hidden.

The purposes and date of this monument and kindred ones have, of course, formed the theme of endless conjectures, which cannot be repeated here. It is sufficient to say that it is now commonly believed that such monuments were sepulchral, and originally enclosed tumuli, which in countless ages have disappeared. Stonehenge, with its gigantic trilitha, tenons, mortices, and well-wrought stones, must be attributed to the 'iron period,' perhaps to a date between 250 and 100 B.C., while Avebury and Rollright, where there are no traces of trilitha, and where the stones are quite undressed, are very much more ancient. 'If the reader be more venturesome, and should fix their erection some eight or ten centuries before our era, it would be difficult to

* The local folk-lore now says that Rollright stones, if removed and put to any utilitarian purpose, will not 'lie quiet,' but will make mischief till restored.

advance any critical reasons against his hypothesis.'* The Whispering Knights are the remains of a cromlech which once formed the sepulchral chamber in the centre of a barrow long since vanished. There is precisely such another cromlech at Hoar Stone, near Enstone, a few miles south; and the Hawk Stone and the Devil's Quoits,† near Stanton Harcourt, must be referred to the same category.

* 'Origines Celticæ,' ii. 217.

† Local tradition says that the devil played quoits with a beggar for his soul, and won by flinging these great stones.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROMAN OCCUPATION.

IN the year 55 B.C., when Julius Cæsar for the first time invaded Britain, the south-east parts of the island were inhabited by various Celto-British tribes, of which the names have come down to us in a classicized and probably much mutilated form. The Kantii inhabited a district which corresponds very closely to modern Kent. Immediately west of them on the sea-coast, with Chichester (Regnum) for their capital, were the Regni; and further west, again, and reaching also far inland, were the Belgæ, whose chief towns were Old Sarum (Sorbiodunum) and Winchester (Venta Belgarum). Modern Essex was held by the Trinobantes, with Colchester (Camulodunum) as capital. Of tribes further inland, the Atrebates occupied a territory including modern Berkshire, lying north of the Belgæ and south of the Thames; their chief town was Silchester (Calleva Atrebatum). West of the Trinobantes were the Catuvelauni (also written less correctly Catyeuchlani), whose capital was St. Albans (Verulamium). The east boundary of this tribe was the river Lea, but the limit of their territory to the west is not so certain; it may have been originally the Chiltern range, but was constantly being pushed further west at the expense of their neighbours the Dobuni. The Dobuni or Boduni occupied, as we have seen, the district west of the Catuvelauni, including Oxfordshire, and extending probably to the Severn. Cirencester (Corinium) seems to have been their most important town. The Catuvelauni were the foremost tribe in Britain in the last century B.C. They were then gradually extending their territory west and south, and acquiring a hegemony in South Britain, which was checked for a time, but not terminated, by Cæsar's invasion. Such is the commonly received geography, but the situation admits of no certainty, and any theories of tribal limits must be elastic.

With the two campaigns of Julius Cæsar in 55 and 54 B.C. we are not concerned, because he certainly never penetrated into the

country as far as Oxfordshire. How he weighed anchor at midnight from Portus Ictius (probably Wissant, near Calais) on a fine night at the end of August, when the moon was near the full, and, coming opposite the white cliffs of Dover in the summer morning, found them crowded with armed men, skirted the forelands, and landed near Deal, is a well-known story that can never lose its fascination. But neither in this first campaign nor in his second in the summer of the following year did he do much more than prospect the south-east corner of the island, and did not on either occasion remain long enough to attain any permanent result whatever. The Roman invasion enabled the weaker tribes to fling off for a time the yoke which the Catuvelaunian supremacy was putting upon them, and Cæsar pushed on as far as Verulamium (St. Albans), where he stormed Cassivelaunus' stronghold, and forced the Catuvelaunian King to sue for peace on terms. The advance of winter, in his second expedition, led him to withdraw to the Continent, and after receiving Cassivelaunus' formal submission, taking hostages, and imposing a nominal tribute, he withdrew the whole of his forces. His imperial successors did not pursue his scheme of annexation, and for a century Britain remained unattached to the Roman Empire and unvisited by Roman troops. During the whole of this period however, constant communication was maintained with the Continent, and the Roman influence, which was paramount in Gaul, made itself felt in many ways also in Britain. This is especially noticeable in the coinage. The native British coinage was continued, indeed, till the Claudian invasion (A.D. 43), but begins to alter its character and to show distinct traces of Roman design as early as 40 or 30 B.C. We read also of envoys proceeding from Britain to Rome to present their respects to the Emperors.

The power of the Catuvelaunians, though it received a rude check in Cæsar's invasion, had afterwards recovered, and in the century which followed became a paramount influence in the South of Britain. It is probable that the whole of Oxfordshire had fallen under the Catuvelaunians, and that the frontier of that tribe had been pushed west as far as the line of Edgehill, leaving to the Dobuni the district between that range and the Severn.

With the year 43 A.D. a new epoch of British history opens, for in that year the Romans invaded the island in earnest, and began an occupation which lasted four centuries. Claudius was Emperor at Rome; Cunobelin, the famous Catuvelaunian King, familiar to us from his coins,* and as the Cymbeline of Shakespeare, had

* The gold pieces of Cunobelin are at once the most numerous, the finest, and by far the most familiar, of British coins.

passed away, and his sons Caractacus and Togodumnus reigned in his stead. For the history of the Roman campaign of 43, we must rely chiefly upon Dio Cassius, a Greek-writing historian, who compiled his account a century and a half after the events he describes. He professes to derive his information from the books of Tacitus, describing this first campaign, which are now lost. 'One Bericus, who had been driven out of the island for sedition,' sought Claudius' protection, and induced him to send forces to invade Britain. This Bericus was possibly a third son of Cunobelin whom Caractacus and Togodumnus had ousted from his rights; he has been generally identified with the Verica of the British coinage. The general selected by Claudius to conduct the invasion was a famous senator, Aulus Plautius, who afterwards proved himself a commander of no mean parts. Plautius assembled on the Gallic coast a force of four legions, probably amounting with their auxiliaries to about 50,000 men. There were signs of discontent; the men grumbled at having to fight beyond the limits of the world, and finally refused to go. Narcissus, a favourite and freedman of Claudius, was sent from Rome to restore order, and attempted to harangue the refractory troops. His character did not inspire the soldiers; they would not hear him, and interrupted with scurrilous gibes. Immediately afterwards, however, feeling ashamed, they professed their willingness to follow Plautius, and the expedition sailed from Gesoriacum (Boulogne) in 43 A.D. The Roman general divided his fleet into three portions, which effected a landing, probably, at Hythe, Dover, and Richborough. The natives offered no opposition, but fled to the marshes and the wood, where Plautius 'had no small difficulty to find them out.' Kent was thus abandoned without a blow being struck. The rest of Aulus Plautius' campaign, if it could only be made out, would be of interest in the present connection, for it is probable that he brought Oxfordshire at this time under the rule of Rome. To construct a reasonable plan of the Roman march from the scanty notices left has proved little more than an interesting conundrum; but it may console us to find one fact standing out clearly in the mist: Plautius received the submission of the Dobuni. Of the many attempts made to unravel the riddle of Plautius' march, Dr. Guest's still seems as successful as any. He supposes that, after finding no foemen in Kent, Plautius advanced north-west, skirting the gigantic forest of Anderida. At length coming up with the British forces, he defeated Caractacus and Togodumnus, sons of Cunobelin and joint Kings of the Catuvelaunians. After their defeat he moved on and took Silchester, the capital of the Atrebates. From thence he penetrated still

further west, and occupied Cirencester, the capital of the Dobuni. To reach Cirencester he must have crossed the Berkshire downs, and passed the line of great 'Atrebatic' hill-forts mentioned in the preceding chapter. His march probably followed the line subsequently taken by the Roman road, and would lead him close to Liddington and Banbury Castles. These two strongholds could scarcely have been left unsubdued in the rear, and it is probable that Plautius carried them by storm on his westward march.

At Cirencester he received the submission of the Dobuni. They were at this time subject at least in part to the Catuvellaunian yoke, but after the defeat of Caractacus and Togodumnus were apparently nothing loath to get free from it at the cost of submission to Rome. Plautius would welcome their overtures, for he was near 200 miles from his landing-place, and would be glad enough to find at Cirencester a new base for further north and west operations. Here he formed a permanent camp, which developed later into the great Roman town of Corinium. Being thus master of the country as far west as the Severn, he left a garrison at Cirencester and turned his steps eastward again. On his return journey he followed the British trackway called the Icknield Way, which ran along the Berkshire downs,* passed the remaining Atrebatic hill forts, and reduced them. These would be Uffington, Letcombe, Skootchamfly (Cwichelmshlœwe), and Blewbury in the order named. He would then be very near the Thames, and the place at which he crossed it has always been a disputed point. The matter is of more importance than would at first appear, for at the crossing he fought *the* battle of the campaign.

'And when Plautius came to a river, which the Barbarians thought unpassable by the Romans for want of a bridge, and therefore lay careless and secure in their camp on the other side, he sent over the Germans, who were accustomed to swim through the most rapid streams under arms. These, surprising the enemy contrary to their expectation, attacked none of the men, but only wounded their chariot horses, which being thus disordered endangered the riders. Then he despatched Flavius Vespasianus (then serving in Britain under Plautius), who was afterwards Emperor, and his brother Sabinus, a Legate, who likewise having passed the river, surprised and slew many of the Barbarians. However, the rest did not flee upon this, but engaged afresh the

* Others hold that on this eastward march he kept always to the north of the Thames; an examination of the map points to the probability of his having at first marched on the south of the river.

day following, when the battle remained doubtful till C. Sidius Geta (who narrowly escaped being taken) gave them such a defeat that triumphal honours were conferred upon him, though he had not been a Consul. After this the Britons retreated to the river Thames where it empties itself into the sea, and, overflowing, stagnates; this they safely passed, being acquainted with those places which were firm at bottom and fordable, but the Romans ran great hazard in following them. Then the Germans again swam over, and others passed at a bridge a little above; and so fell upon them and made a great slaughter; but rashly pursuing the rest, they fell among unpassable bogs and lost many of their men. For this reason, and because the Britons were so far from being disheartened at the loss of Togodumnus that they prepared for war with more vigour to avenge his death, Plautius, fearing the consequence, advanced no further, but securing what he had gained with a garrison, sent for Claudius, which he had been ordered to do in case of any violent opposition,' etc.

This is Dio's account, and the attempts that have been made to elucidate it are numberless. Horsley and many others have taken the *Severn* to be the impassable river over which the Germans swam. This view is, however, now generally discarded, and the scene of the battle is laid on the banks of the Upper Thames. Plautius had subdued the hill-forts on the Berkshire frontier overlooking the valley of the Thames. He was probably following the Icknield Way from west to east, and when this old trackway crossed the Thames, he would naturally cross into Oxfordshire and follow the road as it skirts the Chilterns. At the place of crossing the great battle would be fought. On the whole, it seems safest to fix this point as being in the near vicinity of Wallingford. Others contend vigorously for a point further north, and attribute the earthworks by the riverside at Dorchester to the vicissitudes of this campaign. After this battle Plautius continued his march east, keeping on the north bank of the Thames till the site of modern London was reached. The place of the second battle in Dio's account, quoted above, may most probably be sought in a passage of the Lea and the marsh-lands then existing at the junction of that river with the Thames. With the rest of the campaign we are not concerned, except to remark that to Plautius' fortified camp, in which his forces waited Claudius' arrival, the origin of London is possibly to be attributed. A writer of notes on Oxfordshire during the Roman occupation may be excused for having dwelt somewhat at length on Plautius' campaign. Shadowy and unsatisfactory Dio's account may be, but it is a treasure to the historian as being the only surviving

narrative of events which can, with any show of probability, be considered as happening in this district during the whole of the Roman occupation. Any clues as to the Roman settlement of the county must be sought in the roads, villas, and other evidences that the soil gives us, rather than in the pages of historians.

After the record of that great battle fought by Plautius a curtain so impenetrable falls on the stage of Roman life in this district that, of all the hundred classic writers who speak of Britain, not one narrates any transaction which took place here, and of all the places mentioned in the Roman army lists, road-books and other geographic treatises that remain, not a single name has been safely identified with any place within the limits of Oxfordshire. It is on the fighting frontier lines of Wales and Scotland that the Roman military history of the first two centuries is written, and York monopolizes the dismal intrigue and assassination that made up the political life of the third and fourth. Oxfordshire was left to the quiet of her pastoral and woodland life. The Roman towns were here few and unimportant, but each of the many villas of the Roman colonists was a little centre of civilization that gradually Latinized and humanized the sparse inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

The question naturally occurs, whether there was a Roman settlement at Oxford itself, and it is nearly certain there was not. The site of the present city, a gravel promontory in the delta of the Thames and Cherwell, commanding the valleys of both streams and conveniently raised above the floods, seems at first view to have much to commend it; but the absence of either British or Roman remains is strong negative evidence against the theory of any very early settlement.* Oxford lies at a considerable distance from any of the great Roman highways, and in spite of Plot's *diverticulum*† at Headington, close and critical examination has failed to reveal any trace whatever of a Roman road leading to it.

The chief authority for the Roman roads in Britain is the 'Antonine Itinerary,'‡ and its information is checked to some

* Those who wish to see the question discussed at length should consult the 'Early History of Oxford' (J. H. Parker), chap. iii., and 'Archæologia Oxoniensis,' Part I.

† Plot, 'Natural History of Oxford,' p. 318, ed. 1677.

‡ The date of this remarkable work is as difficult to determine as the origin of its name. Advocates are to be found for assigning it to any date between 150 and 300 A.D., and the honour of the ascription has been given to many Antonines. It is a road-book of the Roman Empire at a period of its widest extent, and covers the whole of the Roman dominion from the Euphrates to the Northumbrian Wall. The distances from town to town or station to station are roughly (plus or minus) estimated in miles, and halting-places, changes of horses, and various other particulars are given incidentally. It is on far too elaborate a scale to have been attempted by any who had not

extent by three other important geographic works: the γεωγραφικὴ ὑφήγησις of Ptolemy, the 'Notitia Dignitatum,' and the 'Cosmographia Ravennæ.'* These works form, roughly speaking, the apparatus for any research into the Roman occupation of Britain, and one and all are absolutely silent so far as Oxfordshire is concerned. Not one place mentioned in any of them can possibly be identified as lying within this county.

From the great Roman north-west road, called the Watling Street, which ran from London towards Shrewsbury, a branch road turned nearly due west, about thirty miles from London. This branch road was afterwards called the Akeman Street, and ran through Tring, Aylesbury, past Alchester, to Cirencester (Corinium), and so on to Bath (Aquæ Solis). Beside this road there was another, a little further south, which also ran from London to the West. Trending first to the south, this second road crossed the Thames at Staines (Pontes), reached the great city of Calleva (Silchester), then, turning in a north-west direction, passed Spinæ (the little Berkshire village of Spene), and came to Cirencester.

If the map is examined, it will be seen that these two Roman roads running to the West form roughly an extended oval of that sort known to mathematicians as prolate, with London at the eastern, and Cirencester at the western, extremity. The city of Oxford lies well within this oval, and quite remote from either road. It is eight miles distant from the Akeman Street on the north, and twenty or thirty from the more southern road through Silchester. This southern road figures in the 'Antonine Itinerary,'

imperial sources of information at command, and it was no doubt compiled in the public ordnance offices of Rome for the use of Emperors, public officials, military officers, and others whose duties called them to travel. The title and other considerations point to the probability of its having been originally written in the reign of Antoninus Pius (138 to 161 A.D.), but it is certain that additions were made later as required, and it has been largely interpolated. Of its general accuracy there is ample evidence, but the state of geographical knowledge at the time, forbids any pressing of details. The iters or routes given in it are eminently practical, and are such as we should expect travelling officials to require. They vary in length from eight to one thousand miles.

* Ptolemy wrote his 'Geographia' *circa* 140 to 160 A.D. It consists mostly of a list of places in various countries, with their latitude and longitude, and mentions some objects of interest. Ptolemy's knowledge of Britain is extensive, and in the main correct, though he goes quite wrong over the position of Ireland and Scotland. The 'notitia dignitatum et administrationum omnium tam civilium quam militarium in partibus orientis et occidentis' is a combined army and civil service list. It gives the names of the provinces, the civil and military authorities, the regiments, and the places at which they were quartered. Its date is *circa* 300 A.D.

The 'Cosmography of Ravenna' was written by a geographer at Ravenna possibly about 580, and is little more than a long list of provinces and military stations, but its accuracy has been established in many cases.

and its course is pretty well understood; it does not demand, however, our present consideration, as it does not touch Oxfordshire at any point. The more northern Akeman Street, which passes right through the county in a south-west direction, finds no mention in the 'Itinerary.' This omission is unfortunate. It may be due either to the Akeman Street not being a road of sufficient importance to warrant insertion, or to its being made at a period later than the compilation of the 'Itinerary,' or, lastly, to the caprice or want of complete information of the compiler. The second reason is the most probable, and other evidence points to this road being of late Roman construction. Its line through Oxfordshire can be traced with some certainty. In many portions of its course it is still used as a road; in others its outline can easily be made out; and even where less distinct, examination will generally reveal some vestiges of the track. It enters the county from the east about two miles from the hamlet of Blackthorn, near Ambroseden. It can be traced thence through Wretchwick, Chesterton, past the north edge of Kirtlington Park, across the Cherwell, past the south edge of Tackley Park, by Stonesfield, right through Wychwood Forest, to Asthall, where it crosses the Windrush, up the hillside across the Cheltenham road, and so into Gloucestershire. At various points on or in the vicinity of the Akeman Street Roman remains have been found, and it passes the Roman station at Alchester, as well as several barrows of uncertain date, including those in Wychwood and the famous Asthall barrow. Mention has been made in the previous chapter of the trackway in the south-east of the county —the Icknield Way—which, though of British origin, was afterwards used by the Romans.

There were probably no Roman towns of any special importance within the actual borders of Oxfordshire. Somewhat to the south, in Berkshire, lay the city of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester), where five Roman ways met, and where painstaking research is at present uncovering so much of interest. On the west, in Gloucestershire, were the important towns of Corinium (Cirencester) and Glevum (Gloucester). In Oxfordshire proper the only stations worth mentioning seem to have been those of Alchester and Dorchester.

The site of Alchester lies exactly eleven miles from Oxford on the highroad to Bicester. The road here makes an angle, turning sharply to the north, and on the right, just at this turn, a few very low mounds and some irregularities in the meadows are all that is left to mark the Roman station. The plan is, however, quite easily traced, and shows that the camp was a square of about

360 yards. The Porta Prætoria faced north, and the highway to Bicester, after the aforesaid turn, is a continuation of the Via Prætoria, which passed right through the camp from south to north. The Akeman Street entered Alchester camp on the east side by the Porta Principalis Dextra, passed through it by the Via Principalis, and issued on the west by the Porta Principalis Sinistra. The camp had rounded towers at the four angles. The site of the south-eastern of these towers and the raised causeway of the Via Prætoria are among the best-preserved features of the present site. In the next field to the west are traces of the foundation of some large building known as 'the castle.' From time to time excavation or chance has here discovered walls, foundations, hypocausts, pottery, and coins in large quantities; but even Camden speaks of there being but *paucæ reliquiæ* in his day, and except to the professed antiquary a visit to Alchester will not offer much of interest. Tradition, which is busy with this as with almost all other Roman sites, however desolate, relates that Alchester was once a 'great city,' but there is nothing to warrant the belief that it was ever anything but a small place on a rather desolate road, with such outbuildings and suburbs as a military station would always attract. Various etymologies have been proposed for the name. It has been sought to identify it with the Alauna of the Ravenna cosmographer; others see in it Allecti Castra, and refer it to Allectus' foundation, and the forged itinerary of Richard of Cirencester boldly called it Ælia Castra. If a derivation must be given, Ald-ceaster is at least as probable as any other. It would then be the Old Chester in contradistinction to the more modern Chester or Castle at Bicester. From Alchester a Roman road has been traced to Dorchester, sixteen miles distant. This road ran straight across Otmoor, then a great swamp hemmed in by forests, and can still be detected at intervals, though not so easily as when Dr. Hussey wrote his account of it in 1840.* In the middle of Otmoor, close to this road, stands Jacob's Stone (not unlike a milestone, with some later steps cut on it), which may have been a Roman milliarium. Beyond Dorchester the road's direction is less certain, but there is little doubt that it crossed the Thames, and so passed on to Calleva. Apart from the evidence of its name, vast quantities of Roman remains turned up at Dorchester prove it beyond doubt to have been a Roman station, though possibly of no very great magnitude. The modern village of Dorchester probably covers in part the site

* *Vide* 'An Account of the Roman Road from Allchester to Dorchester,' by Robert Hussey, 1841, giving a careful survey of the road, though Hussey accepted Richard of Cirencester and his itineraries.

of the Roman town, and though its single long and waving street does not at first sight suggest a Roman plan, an examination of older lanes and paths will show that it is not incompatible with it.* The Roman name of the station is entirely unknown, nor is the place mentioned in any itinerary except that in the history of Richard of Cirencester, who dubbed it Dorocina. Dorchester has been up to the present time a mine of Roman relics, though none are now to be seen *in situ*. Even in Leland's time he says that here 'be found *numismata Romanorum* of gold, silver, and brass,' and the place has proved unusually rich in coins. Though finds have been of late somewhat less frequent at Dorchester, it is probable that its fields are by no means exhausted, and that if anything occurred to necessitate extensive digging operations important discoveries of Roman remains would result.

Beside the Akeman Street itself, and this subsidiary cross-road leading from Alchester on the Akeman Street, through Dorchester, to Calleva, there is no doubt that the older British track —the Icknield Way—was made use of by the Romans. It entered the county near Chinnor, skirted the foot of the Chilterns, and passed across the Thames near Wallingford into Berkshire. A description of it has been given in the previous chapter. There are some traces of other roads in the county supposed to be Roman, especially near Banbury, but it is probable that these three constituted the principal channels of traffic during the Roman occupation, and it will be seen that none of them approach the site of Oxford itself.

Except at Dorchester and Alcester, and possibly at Madmarston, near Banbury, there is no evidence of there having been any Roman station of even minor importance in the county proper. During the whole of the Roman occupation it is probable that the great woods which beset Oxfordshire remained uncleared to any considerable extent. Bernwood, Whittlebury, Wychwood, and the Chiltern forests still overshadowed the district, the floods in the river valleys were still unchecked, and the vast and wild swamp of Otmoor still undrained, although across it had been flung the raised causeway leading from Alchester to Dorchester. Oxfordshire was far removed from those frontiers where fighting went on, and equally so from such centres of political life as York or London. For some four centuries of Roman occupation which intervened between the hardships of actual conquest and the pangs of imperial dissolution the quiet of deep peace rested upon these Midland glades, broken only by the traffic of the main roads and by the march of

* *Vide* 'History of Dorchester, Oxon.' Parker and Co., 1882, p. xxxix., etc.

soldiers passing from one military post to another. No events were chronicled, for there were no events to describe.

Although there were in Oxfordshire none of the more important Roman towns, and not one of which we even know the Latin name, yet the book of the soil supplies ample evidence that the Roman population of the county was at least equal to, and probably greater than, that of other analogous districts. Roman potteries have been found at the sewage farm at Littlemore and on Otmoor, near Fencot, and many remains of villas survive. Some of these villas seem to have been of more than ordinary size or refinement. Among the more important may be mentioned those at Stonesfield,* Northleigh, Wigginton, Beckley, and Wheatley, and there were others at Fringford, Middleton, and Woodperry. Each of such villas formed, as a rule, a complete and self-contained settlement. They were a combination of a large country house and a large farm; each was independent, and enclosed within its precincts everything necessary for the maintenance of its owner. The owner himself was sometimes a Roman, but often of other extraction; sometimes his land in Oxfordshire would have been granted him by the State for military or other service, sometimes he would be a rich provincial from Gaul who had acquired it by purchase. In all the Roman colonial population there was no doubt originally a very strong military element, gradually growing weaker in these inland rural districts with long peace and free intermarriage, and sometimes being revived when a fresh contingent of soldiers was

* The great villa of Stonesfield was discovered in ploughing, January 25, 17$\frac{1}{2}$. In it were four tessellated pavements, one of great size (35 feet by 20 feet) and magnificent design. The antiquary Hearne was exceedingly interested in the discovery. He set off at five o'clock on the morning of February 2 to see it, and walked from Oxford to Stonesfield (eight miles) and back before nightfall. On a June morning he was even earlier, for he left Oxford at three in the morning, and altogether he paid the place some ten visits before writing a 'discourse' on the villa. For a time, according to Hearne, Stonesfield was included in the sight-seeing curriculum of visitors to Blenheim; but the remains have long since disappeared, and even the site is now not known. Of the magnificent pavement drawings yet survive, and its surpassing excellence caused it to be engraved as a frontispiece of one of the volumes of Pitisco's 'Lexicon Antiquitatum Romanorum' (Venice, 1719). Hearne was very much concerned to prove that the chief figure of the design represented Apollo killing the Python, and not Bacchus with a tiger. A small fragment of it still exists in the Ashmolean Museum. The villa itself was re-opened in 1779, and its area appears to have been 190 feet by 152 feet.

Of the Northleigh villa there is a good account in Skelton's 'Oxfordshire.' It was discovered in 1813, and is one of the finest in England. It consists mainly of an irregular quadrangle 212 feet long on the longest side, and about sixty rooms have been uncovered, of which many had at first their tessellated floors well preserved.

In making a cutting on the Great Western Railway about two miles from Northleigh, another tessellated pavement was found, but totally destroyed.

drafted to some station in their confines. This military habit was a necessity for the settlers in the earlier stages of the occupation, and even to the end the 'villa' had no doubt at times to be put into a state of defence against semi-organized marauders. The property about the house would be sometimes the rich land of the river valley, sometimes a naturally open upland, sometimes an artificial 'clearing.' In all cases it would be surrounded by woods, in which lurked not only the boar and the wolf, but also, no doubt, many wild and evil men, outlaws and outcasts, survivals of the older tribes and bitterly anti-Roman. With a raid of such men as these it required all the large body of retainers at an important villa to cope, and no doubt an isolated woodland farm was now and then attacked, looted, and burnt.

The centre point of the villa was, of course, the proprietor's house, and round it grew up the smaller houses of the slaves and retainers, the stables, byres, mills, granaries and all the hundred and one outbuildings and additions required in any large domain. The site was in almost all cases admirably selected, the favourite position being the southern or sunny side of a gently-sloping hill, with a pleasant open prospect, and in the vicinity of water. Here a house was raised which presented as close a counterpart as the climate and other exigencies admitted of the pleasure-houses of South Italy. It was of a sort rendered familiar to travellers by the excavations of Pompeii, but such as has never been seen in England either before or since. Except in rarer instances, the building was of one story only, built solid at the bottom of stone or brick, or such material as the situation offered, for some three feet in height, and above with wood, plaster, and stucco. The centre was a hollow square, of which the memory lingers in ecclesiastical collegiate cloisters. Sometimes this square was a garden, filled with strange herbs and flowers imported from the South, sometimes flagged or gravelled, and generally with a fountain in the middle. Round the square ran a covered colonnaded walk, of which the roof was borne on pillars, and on to the walk opened the principal chambers of the house. The number of rooms in the whole house was in many cases very large, occasionally seventy or eighty, or more, but they were for the most part smaller in size than would be thought consistent with the comfort of a large country house to-day. The outside of the house was plain, and even severe, with few or no windows, but the inside glowed with bright colours, with delicate marbles and stuccoes of gorgeous hues, and surface as smooth and polished as the marbles themselves. Here were shrines and statues and frescoes, fountains and baths, and a host of other

utensils and appliances, of which the use, and even the name, is forgotten; and everywhere for a floor there was the tessellated pavement. Of all the fading memories* of Roman greatness which tradition or disinterred ruins have contrived to preserve in the popular imagination of England, the most real and familiar is this tessellated pavement. It is an object which even the peasant has himself seen uncovered in some lonely field, or has heard told of by his peasant mate. It is a visible and intelligible memento of that long-forgotten past, appealing to all beholders in a language they can understand. To the Roman it was something more. Its graceful designs and mellow tones seem to have been to him almost a matter of religion: wherever his feet went, there went the tessellated pavement for them to stand on. Even generals on foreign service carried in panniers on muleback the little coloured cubes or tessellæ for laying down a pavement in each camping-place, to be taken up again when they moved forward. In England the same sweet emblems of the 'younger gods,' of poetic legend, of love, youth, plenty, and all their happy naturalism, are found constantly repeated. Bacchus with his wild rout, Orpheus playing to a spellbound audience, Apollo singing to the lyre, Venus in Mars' embrace, Neptune with a host of seamen, scollops, and trumpets, Narcissus by the fountain, Jove and Ganymede, Leda and the Swan, wood-nymphs and naiads, satyrs and fauns, masks, hautboys, cornucopiæ, flowers, and baskets of golden fruit—what touches of home they must have seemed to those old dwellers in the Oxfordshire wilds!

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It has often been wondered how natives of the South, conventional Romans, nurtured in every luxury, were able to leave the splendour of the imperial city to endure the wilds of Britain and the rigours of our Northern climate. In part, no doubt, as years went on, generations of Romans would be born who had never known any other land than Britain, but an examination of a great villa like Northleigh goes far to show that even for the newly-transplanted Southerner the severities of a country life could at least be very greatly mitigated. His villa lay sheltered from wild winds partly by the rising brow of the hill, and partly, no doubt, by belts of trees; it was turned towards the South, and caught the full sun. In the spring the breath of his violet-beds would be

* Oxfordshire has been prolific of Roman coins, but not more so than most other parts of England; indeed, as a writer observes, one would imagine, from the enormous quantity of their coins found scattered through the length and breadth of the land, that the Romans spent most of their time in losing money. A hoard of 3,077 Roman coins was found at Evenley, near Brackley, in 1853, and Madmarston and Dorchester have proved fertile fields for coin-hunters.

as soft and sweet as in Oxfordshire woods to-day; in the summer his quadrangle would be gay with calthæ, and his colonnade festooned with roses and helichryse. If we are to believe in the *triclinium æstivum* of Hakewill, it says much for the warmth of those far-away summers that he was driven to build a summer dining-room with a north aspect, and without heating-flues. And when the long nights fell and winter cold set in, the slaves heaped higher the charcoal fires in the *præfurnium;* and the master sat in rooms far better warmed than Oxford country houses now, or sunned himself at mid-day in the sheltered quadrangle, taking his exercise in the warm side of the colonnade among his gay stuccoes and fluted columns. Could we for a moment raise the veil, we should probably find that the country life of 400 A.D. in Oxfordshire was not so very dissimilar to that of to-day. Could we disabuse our minds of the conventional tales of imperial debauch, of the wild luxury of the capital, and all the professional exaggeration of darkness-and-dawn theorists, we should probably recognise that the darkness was neither so obscure nor the dawn so bright as it is painted, and that the well-to-do Roman of rustic Middle-England was by no means the victim of social and religious despair that some would have us believe, but rather, a useful, a peaceful, and a happy person.

CHAPTER III.

SAXONS AND DANES.

VERY early in the fifth century (tradition says in 408 A.D., but the withdrawal was rather a gradual process than a single act), the Roman forces were called back from Britain. Their presence was required to resist nearer home the forces which were gathering to disintegrate the Empire; and from that time Rome admitted that she was no longer mistress of the world, and could not defend such outskirts of her power as Britain. No act of sovereignty was ever exercised by the imperial Government subsequently in this island, and the Roman occupation, which had lasted 350 years, and conferred incalculable benefit on Britain, came thus to an end.

Beyond the withdrawal of the imperial forces there was no definite act of severance, and it is likely that the awful significance of the event passed quite unrecognised. It is true that chroniclers writing long afterwards tell tales of the inhabitants passionately entreating the legionaries not to desert them, and of the soldiers leaving patterns of their weapons and armour, and bidding those who were left behind imitate their arms and be of good cheer; but they wrote in the light of subsequent events, and even if some had vague misgivings, the general life of the south part of the island probably went on exactly as usual for a considerable time.

But mischief was brewing in the East. Long before the abandonment of the island by the Romans, the piratical inhabitants of the low sea-coasts from the Rhine to the Baltic had given trouble. From the whole of the Frisian basin lawless 'keels' were constantly sailing to land on and to harry the neighbouring coast. It was to repress attacks such as these that the Roman officer called the Count of the Saxon Shore was appointed in Britain, and had under his supervision and protection the whole of the south-east coast of the island.

For some years the Roman life went on in Britain as serenely after the departure of the Roman legions as it had done before. But by degrees the sea-rovers became aware that the reins of empire were relaxed, and that they had no longer to do with an organized and invincible power. Their incursions became more frequent and more serious. In the North, too, the Pictish raids had grown to be a source of constant terror and alarm. The appeal to Ætius in his third consulate (449 A.D.), and the tragic letter begging for aid, called the 'Groans of the Britains,' are well-known tales, if nothing more. We can easily imagine how those who could remember the discipline and iron face of Rome must have longed to see once more the gleam of the eagles, and to hear the heavy tread of the legionaries, or the 'long stern swell that bids the Roman close.'

But it was not to be. About 450 A.D. the first permanent settlement of the North Sea raiders was probably made in South-East Britain, and from that day the fate of the island was sealed. In the ensuing century, between 450 and 550 A.D., the invaders, Jutes, Engles, and Saxons, made themselves masters of the whole of the coast from the Humber to Poole. The change was wrought by no sudden rush, but by a very gradual process of hand-to-hand fighting, in which quarter was seldom asked or given by either side.

For a century and a half after the Romans had left Britain there is no contemporary history whatever of anything that went on in the island. Any connected account must necessarily be evolved from the inadequate notices of the Saxon chronicles written at least 300 years after the events, and without facilities for obtaining authentic information. What guesswork such history must be can be gathered from a comparison of the utterly different conclusions to which the same indications have led the greatest authorities. The fifth and sixth centuries have been aptly named the 'two lost centuries of Britain,' and there is no likelihood that any convincing light will ever be flung upon their darkness.

Some general facts are, however, admitted. The conquest of the coast went on piecemeal. Independent bodies of invaders landed at different spots, and, settling down, annexed the country which immediately surrounded them. The great Roman fortress-towns which lined the coast and the coast district, such as Eboracum, Camulodunum, Rutupiæ, Regulbium, Durovernum, Regnum, Anderida, and many others, made a protracted and vigorous resistance. But they were isolated one from another, were taken in detail, and, with the doubtful exception of London,

gradually succumbed. Although we are only told definitely in two instances that massacre followed capture, yet the fall of each was no doubt more or less of a tragedy, and the horror of the sack of Anderida has lingered to this day. By the middle of the sixth century the coast-line of the East of England was in the hands of the Anglo-Saxons, as they may be most conveniently called, and the British population was either exterminated, reduced to slavery, or driven into the interior.

But as yet only the first line of defence was broken; it was only the coast that had been occupied—the invaders had made practically no inroads into the heart of the island. On the east there were the Chilterns, standing as a natural march to the territory of the English, and on the south ran the gigantic forest of Andredsweald, some 120 miles long and thirty or forty broad, reaching from the West of Kent to Southampton Water. This great barrier had not yet been penetrated; and the open strip of land called the Caint, between it and the Thames, and all the Midlands to the west, including the Oxfordshire district, stood still intact.

During the long period in which the Anglo-Saxons were occupying the coast districts, and consolidating their conquests, it is probable that the rustic life of Oxfordshire went on pretty much as usual. The departure of the troops would, no doubt, make a great difference in the more purely military stations, such as there is reason to believe Alchester was. A very serious drain on the prime of British manhood had been going on for some years previous to the final departure of the Roman soldiers. A conscription, heavier than the heaviest of modern times, was constantly in operation for the supply of the Continental levies; and besides this imperial aspirants of British origin, such as Constantine II. and others, had taken with them almost *en bloc* the best of the fighting population of Britain to aid their causes upon the mainland. So that when the Roman troops were recalled from a small station like Alchester, there were no others to take their place, and, indeed, there would be a feeling that such a military establishment was an unnecessary luxury. The barracks would remain untenanted, and with the removal of the soldiers the reason for the existence of all the lesser buildings which had grown up round the military centre would cease; the houses would be left uninhabited, and the tenants would remove to larger and more active places. In a few years the station would be entirely deserted, and would gradually fall into disrepair and ruin. This, we know, happened in many of the smaller stations, though not in all. It probably happened at Alchester, though it is, of

course, possible that the place may have been sacked and destroyed in the later wars and raids. At Dorchester-on-Thame, connected with Alchester, as we have seen, by the raised causeway across the bogs of Otmoor, the site was never abandoned. The life of that station preserved its continuity by a thin thread through the storm of English invasion, to develop into the ecclesiastical centre of the vast pre-Conquest bishopric, and dwarf again into the agricultural village of to-day.

On the west border of the county the great city of Corinium (Cirencester) was as prosperous as ever. There the easy town life went on undisturbed and unaffected by the retirement of the Roman forces; the routine business of the basilica, the traffic of the forum, the pleasures of the amphitheatre and bath, continued much as they had done before. To Corinium the wealthy proprietors of the great villas of Chedworth, or Northleigh, or Stonesfield, would still go up when they wanted to dispose of produce, or to enjoy the relaxation of a town life. Their fools' paradise was as yet undisturbed; the fighting was far away; the invaders had not broken the second line of defence.

There were perhaps some mutterings of the coming storm, and the Akeman Street and Iknield Way must have seen from time to time many bodies of armed men marching South to join the British forces, who were withstanding the West Saxons in the Gwent, as the open campaign on the west of Andredsweald round Winchester was called. Some will have it that a memory of this period is preserved in the name of a village near Bicester, Ambrosden. Among the figures which move across the misty stage of British history in these fifth and sixth centuries, one of the most striking and attractive is Ambrosius Aurelianus. Tradition makes him a soldier who by his merits raised himself to the command of the British forces. These forces, with what unity they could maintain, were then engaged in fighting against the inroads of Cerdic at the head of the West Saxons, who was pressing inland from Venta Belgarum (Winchester), which had recently fallen into his hands. Ambres, or Ambrosius, has been called the last of the Romans in Britain. He was, so the tale runs, a Christian, and as the Natanleod, or Prince of the Sanctuary, is accredited with the foundation of the great monastery of Amesbury (Ambresbyrig). He was an ardent admirer of all Roman methods; and taking to himself the title of Aurelianus, still a name to conjure with, he assumed the leadership of the Romano-British party, and fought continuously with valour and dogged persistence against the West Saxons. Ambrosden, near Bicester, and not very far from Alchester, is supposed to mark an occupa-

tion, temporary or otherwise, by this heroic general. After inflicting many defeats, and withstanding the foe again and again, he met the West Saxons in a final and disastrous battle in 508 A.D., where he and 5,000 of his men were left dead on the field.* In the death of Ambrosius, the last gleam of the imperial purple was quenched in Britain. His mantle, it is true, fell on more or less mythical successors—on Owen, on Uther, on Arthur—but the defeat of 508 was the beginning of the end. The invaders were breaking through the second line of defence; they were penetrating the forests, and surmounting the hills which had so long confined them to the coast, and northward through Hampshire, Wilts, and Berkshire, and westward up the Thames Valley, were pressing forward into Middle England.

About the year 571 A.D., the chronicles† have an entry that the West Saxons, under Cuthwulf, fought with the British at Bedford, and conquering them there took four towns, 'Lygean-burh, and Ægeles-burh, and Bænsing-tun, and Egones-ham.' Lygean-burh, the first-mentioned of these places, has been dubiously identified with Lenborough in Buckinghamshire; the other towns are certainly Aylesbury, Bensington, and Eynsham. The Chiltern Hills, which with their steeps and dense woods had so long proved a rampart against all invasion from the east, were thus taken in the rear; and with Bensington at the southern, and Aylesbury at the northern end, passed entirely into the hands of the West Saxons.‡ The capture of Eynsham meant that they were in possession of the Wytham Hills, and of the whole of the Oxford district which lay in the plain between them and the Chilterns. It is probable that at an early period the West Saxons had penetrated into the basin of the Cherwell, and used the valleys running into it as a ready road for operating against the Britons. Thus, the Grimsdike (mentioned in Chapter I.) running between the Glyme and Evenlode was possibly used at this time by the British as a barrier to check Saxon advances in the Cherwell basin. In 577, six years later, there is another entry of vast importance. The West Saxons had taken the three cities of Gleawan-cæster, Ciren-cæster, and Bathan-cæster. They are said to have taken them from 'three British kings,' after defeating them at the great battle of Deorham. The statement may point to these great cities having maintained an isolated and quasi-independent life, and to Roman traditions being continued in the

* The site of this battle is not determined; it was possibly in South Wilts, and Stonehenge has been fantastically assigned as a monument to the slain.

† The amount of credit to be attached to the chronicles varies with different estimators.

‡ J. H. Parker, 'Early History of Oxford,' p. 82.

person of a first magistrate, who kept up a small court of his own. Thus, the three fair cities—the great Western Triad of Glevum, Corinium, and Aquæ Solis—had fallen, and the West Saxon rule was pushed to the Severn. And so at the close of the sixth century Oxford was in the centre of a West Saxon kingdom which reached, on the one hand, from the Anglian territory on the east coast, to the Welsh territory across the Severn, and on the other from the English Channel to an ill-defined point in the North which may have been the marches of the Northumbrian kingdom.

The meagre entries in the chronicles, while they summarize results, give us little indication of the process by which they were arrived at. The details must be filled in by conjecture and analogy. The Saxons appear to have been essentially destructive in their methods of conquest. It was not only that they destroyed inhabitants, but they destroyed habitations. They had no idea of making any buildings of their own worth the name, and they had an objection to other people's. In that period of terrible fighting, during which the Anglo-Saxons acquired the south-east coast-line, defeat and extermination are held by many historians to have been synonymous terms; but however this may be, there is reason to believe that by the time they reached Oxfordshire the intervening century had somewhat softened their methods. Settlement and agriculture, however rude, had had some humanizing influence upon them, and the civilization of Rome, with which they were brought face to face, could not have been without effect, however much they might try to obliterate it. Thus, the conquest of the West was not so devastating as that of the East. Bath, Gloucester, and Cirencester all survived, while Anderida and Calleva were wiped out. It is reasonable, also, to conclude that a very considerable part of the British population were here allowed to live—mostly women and children, but also men, and those perhaps not always reduced to slavery.

But on the Romano-British country houses, the villas with which Oxfordshire was studded, the conquerors had no mercy. They were first sacked and then burned. For the most part, the Saxons probably found them already deserted, for the inhabitants had retired to Cirencester and the other Western cities in the face of the coming storm, and the more valuable appointments would have been thus already removed. In many instances where Roman habitations have been discovered, there are indications of the houses having been destroyed by fire; and at Northleigh, Chedworth, and many others, the burnt roofs have fallen in and broken the tessellated pavements below, and charred beams

and roofing tiles are found in a heap among the scattered tessellæ.

Such utter and wanton destruction has been often attributed to an *odium theologicum*, to the rancour of heathenism against Christianity. But facts scarcely warrant any such deduction. Britain was probably little less pagan at her best than her Saxon conquerors. Christianity was not even a general veneer, but could have had only a most precarious footing in isolated spots. Among all the countless objects dating from the Roman occupation that have been disinterred in this island, there has scarcely been discovered one bearing any trace of Christian influence or symbolism. Except the so-called 'church' at Silchester, there has never been anything to show that Christianity had even the habitation in Britain that was accorded to a hundred other cults. There is no trace of Christianity in any inscription, and even among the funeral epitaphs, where we might have fairly expected to find its expression, the *Dis Manibus* and other time-hallowed dedications prevail till the latest flicker of Roman life had died out; there is not a gravestone to any Christian soldier. So that it is not likely that the zeal with which the Saxons destroyed the material effects of Roman civilization was prompted by any antagonism of religious belief, but rather by the natural antagonism between high culture on the one hand and semi-savagery on the other, between the dwellers in cities and the dwellers in the country. The Saxons had no sympathy with any city life. They were no builders, their villages were small; a group of little wooden buildings in a stockaded clearing, clustered round the larger wooden house of the chief of the clan, was the ordinary type of their settlement, and there were no doubt a fair proportion of these in Oxfordshire. They seem to have erected no stone buildings at all till a very much later period, or, at least, if they did so, no traces have survived. The wood around the clearing was carefully preserved as a sort of hedge, or mark, to separate it from obnoxious neighbours; for the bent of the Saxon mind was towards isolation, and this trait and his love of a country life have survived in English character to the present day. Beside the Saxon stockaded villages, with their common pasture-land, which were sprinkled through the country, there must have been for many long years a sprinkling of buildings of quite a different sort—the ruins of Roman towns and Roman villas, like stranded wrecks, wasting gradually year by year under the stress of weather and the progress of natural decay. There would be the station at Alchester (the Old Chester), with walls half burnt (and afterwards pulled down to build the newer works at Bicester), standing between

the swamps of Otmoor and the forests of Bernwood and Whittlebury. The great thoroughfare of the Akeman Street on which it lay was still used no doubt, though lapsing gradually like all the other roads into disrepair, while sixteen miles away the dwindled life of Dorchester crept on around the deserted barracks, and ruined houses and walls. So it was all through the land, and so the scarred heaps of débris marked the sites of the old villas on their sunny southern slopes, until the baths were choked, and the roofs of the hypocausts fell in, and the grass came up through the tessellæ, and spread a cloak over it all, and finally the plough levelled even the mounds, the last memorial of the happy homes that had passed away. Something of the same kind may be seen on the north coast of Africa to-day, where in the waste the wrecks of Rome—the houses lining the narrow streets, the bases of the colonnaded pillars, and even the triumphal arch—still stand gaunt, shattered, and alone.

In the years that followed many a homeless wayfarer and many an outcast or marauder was glad enough to use at times such shelter as could be found in the underground vaults or patched-up wall of a Roman villa. Traces of such subsequent occupation have been often found, and it is to this period that the curious name of Cold Harbour is perhaps to be attributed. There are in England some eighty or ninety spots so called, and three of these are in Oxfordshire. It is probable that this name usually marks the site of Roman remains, and although all kinds of derivations have been proposed to explain it, there seems no good reason for going beyond the natural meaning of the words. They are at least sufficiently descriptive of the miserable lodging such dank ruins would afford.

At the opening of the seventh century Oxfordshire formed, as we have seen, a part of the great West Saxon kingdom; and it is just about this time that a new power comes upon the scene. In 626 is recorded for the first time the accession of a King of Mercia. The Mercians were those English who, settling on the middle eastern coast, had pushed up the Humber, and used the Trent Valley as a means of access to Central Britain. The name Mercia is derived with some show of probability from the mark, march, or frontier, where fighting was continually going on with the British on the west.

The growing power of the West Saxons, which bade fair at this period to absorb the whole of the country, met its first reverse from Mercia. The King of Mercia whose accession is recorded in 626 was Penda. Under this famous fighting champion of paganism, who ruled from 626 to 655, his dominions were con-

stantly extended. The West Saxons pushing North, met the Mercians pushing South, and after many collisions had occurred, it is probable that a treaty was come to between Cwichelm, King of Wessex, and Penda, King of Mercia, by which the Thames was constituted the boundary-line between their kingdoms. If this was so, Oxfordshire would become a frontier country, and Oxford itself (where there is reason to think a small vill was growing up) would be essentially a frontier town. The Thames was the natural boundary-line between the two great kingdoms, and so long as the balance of their power remained steady, so long they were content to accept the river as the frontier. But whenever Mercians or West Saxons acquired a predominating influence, either through the strength of their own ruler or through the weakness of their adversaries, so surely they crossed the Thames and annexed for the time being a portion of the country that lay on the opposite bank. The process went on for two centuries, and the political history of Oxfordshire, so far as it can be made out at all during that period, is an account of this see-saw of conquest and defeat, in which the district belonged alternately to Wessex or Mercia. Thus, about 600 Oxfordshire was part of Wessex; but an entry in the chronicle under the year 628, of fighting at Cirencester, is supposed to indicate that Cwichelm, King of Wessex, was there defeated by Penda, King of Mercia, and that Oxfordshire passed by treaty out of West Saxon hands, the Mercian boundary being extended to the Thames. Wulfhere, Penda's successor, crossed the river, laid the country waste as far as Æscesdun (? Ashdown in Berks), and extended the Mercian dominion to the hills on the south side of Wantage. This was in 661. In 688 Ine, a good and famous King, succeeded to Wessex, and again made the Thames the boundary between the kingdoms. In 752 Cuthred, King of Wessex, crossed the river, and meeting the Mercians under Ethelbald their King at Burford, about twenty miles north-west of Oxford, routed them there and annexed the district.

The battle was fought about a mile from Burford at a place still known as Battle Edge.* Ethelbald's standard bore a dragon, says Camden; and a queer old pagan survival of feasting and carrying the figures of a dragon and a giant through the streets of Burford on Midsummer Eve, which was carried on as late as the last century, was possibly a commemoration of Cuthred's victory a thousand years before.

Oxfordshire remained West Saxon only for a very short period. About 756 Offa came to the throne of Mercia on Ethelbald's demise. He fought with Cynewulf, who had succeeded Cuthred

* Pronounced 'Batlidge.'

in Wessex. The chief battle of the campaign seems to have been fought in 777 at Bensington. Cynewulf was beaten, Bensington taken, and Offa crossed the river and Mercianized the whole of the Wallingford and Wantage district as far as Ashbury in Berkshire. For exactly half a century after this Oxfordshire remained Mercian, until the uninteresting record of frontier fighting and ceaseless change came to an end in 827. In that year Ecbert of Wessex, who had been gradually extending and consolidating his power, conquered and finally brought Mercia under the West Saxon overlordship. In this exploit Fancy has seen the foundation of a United England, and whatever degree of respective suzerainty and dependence was implied in the relations of Wessex and Mercia henceforth, it is certain that from this period Oxfordshire was no longer a frontier land, and was relieved from many of the troubles incident to that state.

With the extension of the West Saxon suzerainty over Mercia, and the semi-consolidation of that kingdom with Wessex in 827, the probabilities of a lasting peace and quiet seemed greater than at any time during the previous three centuries. But this was not to be. Before the internecine quarrels between the two kingdoms were stilled, a new and unexpected actor appeared upon the scene. As early as 789 a new terror had been observed on the Wessex coast, like the print of the savage foot on Crusoe's island. In that year three ships of Northmen were beached on the Southern shore. The Reeve, we read, 'wist not what they were,' but still rode out against them, and there fell fighting. 'Those were the first ships of Danish men that ever sought English kin's land.' The story of the Danish invasion, of how they attacked the coast at each and every point, of their first wintering in the fateful Isle of Thanet, of their almost immediate triumph over divided and distressed East Anglia and Northumbria, of heathenism reintroduced into the land of Cuthbert and Bede, of burning and pillage and slaughter, belongs to the domain of general history, and must here be taken for granted. For a century or more the Saxons seem to have forgotten their old fondness for the sea; but these new Danes were essentially a seafaring folk; they operated always from the water, and a peculiarity of their method of attack was to sail up rivers and estuaries and harry the surrounding country from their boats. Following this usual practice, and made bolder by continual success, they pushed further up the Thames in the year 871 than they had ever got before, and came as far as Reading. There finding that Ethelred and Alfred of Wessex were marching in force against them, they left the river and took up a strong position

on the Berkshire hills at Æscesdun, where Wulfhere of Mercia had defeated the West Saxons in 661. At Æscesdun Alfred routed them completely, and so saved Oxford and the surrounding district from any immediate fear of pillage.

At this point it seems well to allude to the legend which makes Alfred founder of the University of Oxford, in so far as to say that it may be discarded as having no support either of record or of probability. In that great chronicle which is due to his initiative, and in which some of the entries are conceivably made by his own hand, there is no event recorded* which points to his ever having even entered Oxford. The town existed at the time, no doubt, and was probably of some importance; but there was nothing to take Alfred there, and if any University had been founded by him at all, it would no doubt have been at Winchester, his royal city, and centre of whatever literary life then existed in England. Alfred's dogged resistance, and his not unsuccessful attempt at the organization of a national army and navy, led to Guthrum the Dane making a treaty with him, and to the division of England into Wessex and the Danelaw, by a frontier line drawn diagonally across England and based roughly on the line of Watling Street.

There is much obscurity surrounding any events which occurred in this district between Alfred's truce with Guthrum and the close of the ninth century. This truce, fancifully called the Treaty of Wedmore, was of the flimsiest nature; the ink was scarcely dry before the Danes fell to their old practices again. Though no record of the fact exists, it is probable that on more than one occasion before the beginning of the tenth century they had occupied Oxford. We hear of their being at Cricklade and other places in the West, and the way they would naturally have taken to get there would lead them by Oxford, where there were as yet no fortifications to prevent their occupying the city if they wished to do so.

Alfred died in 901, and Edward the elder succeeded him, and it is in Edward's reign that we get the first historic mention of Oxford. This occurs in an entry of the chronicle under the year 912, to the effect that 'this year died Eathered Ealdorman of the Mercians, and King Eadward took possession of London and of Oxford, and of all lands which owed obedience thereto.'

* There is a story of a 'parliament' at Shifford, a little place on the Thames three miles from Bampton, and now consisting only of half a dozen cottages and a modern chapel. In one of the Cottonian MSS. is an entry: 'There sate at Shifford many thanes, many bishops, and many learned men, wise earls, and awful knights. There was Earl Elfrick, very learned in the law, and Alfred, England's herdsman, England's darling. He was King of England; he taught them that could hear him how they should live.' But some contend that the meeting-place was East Shefford in Berks.

It must be remembered that we have now emerged from the region of pure legend and myth, and stand on a somewhat surer basis of 'contemporary history.' The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, if not existent before Alfred's time, may certainly be considered as contemporary from his reign; it is concise, matter-of-fact, and dull to a degree; it differs widely from the distorted jeremiads of Gildas, and is far more extensive in scope than the more essentially ecclesiastic and local compilations of Bede.*

This entry in 912 is scarcely what would have been expected, and the meaning which the words 'took possession of' are intended to convey has been the subject of much discussion.

The exact relations of Wessex, Mercia, and the Danelaw at this period are ill-defined and exceedingly difficult to estimate. It seems robable that the Danes had taken Oxford, and had been afterwards forced to abandon it either by Alfred or Edward the elder, and that the Ealdorman Eathered had been appointed a dependent prince of Mercia to hold Oxford and London against the Danes as a sort of Viceroy of the Wessex King. Eadward had given his sister Æthelflæd to Eathered for wife. On Eathered's death in 912, Eadward resumed possession himself of Oxford and London, while the widowed Æthelflæd continued the vicegerency of Mercia as Under-Queen.

There is reason to think that the earliest fortifications at Oxford date from this period. A vill had probably existed on the site of the present city for at least two centuries, and may have owed something of its importance, if not its origin, to the convent of St. Frideswide. Its prosperity was augmented by its being a ford on the river, and the traffic on the road leading from Berkshire to Oxfordshire over this ford would increase very rapidly with the alliance of Wessex and Mercia, when the Thames was no longer a boundary between two hostile nations.† After the death of Eathered, Æthelflæda, his widow, and Eadward, her brother, seem to have set to work in earnest to build a number of burhs, or fortresses, in commanding positions on the various rivers which it

* The record called the Saxon Chronicle was probably commenced in Alfred's day, though possibly earlier. It begins with an abridgment of Bede's account of pre-Roman Britain, then touches on Cæsar's invasion, and proceeds as a jejune Roman and Church chronology. In the ninth century it becomes more minute, and Alfred's wars with the Danes are especially fully treated. There are different copies of it written in different monasteries, which end at different dates, but by one hand or another it was carried down to the accession of Henry II. Its historical value has been very variously appraised.

† As to the derivation of the name Oxford, it has been the fashion of late years to connect it with the root appearing in the name Ouse (Celtic for 'river'), and so make the meaning of the word to be 'the ford on the river.' But advocates of the time-honoured 'ford of the oxen' explanation are by no means left without argument. For a very full and painstaking examination of the question, *vide* Parker's 'Early History of Oxford,' p. 348 *et seq.*

was likely the Danes would sail up. The dates of the construction of burhs at Tamworth, Bridgnorth, Warwick, and many others, are assigned by the chronicle to various years between 910 and 920, and Oxford, though not mentioned, was probably one of the series. The artificial mound on which one tower of the Norman castle still stands closely resembles those of Warwick and Tamworth, as Mr. Parker points out. As to the nature of the stockades or of the stone buildings which were set upon it, nothing is known. Whatever they might have been, they were destroyed and swept away in subsequent Danish inroads.

The phrase 'all lands which owned obedience thereto,' in the entry of 912, has been taken to imply that some sort of a shire division was then in existence. Nothing is known as to the exact date at which the Midlands were parcelled into shires, nor as to the principles which guided the demarcation. It may reasonably be assumed that the division was not left entirely to chance, and the formation of the Midland shires is certainly later than that of the old kingdom of Wessex and the other coast counties. The older counties—Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hants, Wilts, Berkshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Middlesex, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk—are known to have existed as defined districts in the ninth century. In these (with the exception of Hants) the shire-name is not derived from the chief town, the position of which in the county is quite arbitrary. But till the commencement of the tenth century the great territory of Mercia preserved its homogeneity, at least in name, and was ruled as one shire by one Ealdorman. At this time some division of Mercia into shires seems to have been begun, and the new shires all bear the name of a chief town, about which they were grouped, and which is generally more or less central, with the exception of Oxford. Instances will readily occur, and it is unnecessary to multiply them here. It is probable that Oxford was the first town north of the Thames to which a shire was allotted, and the mention of 'the lands which owed obedience thereto' seems to show that some such division was already existent in the year 912. It was natural, of course, that the Thames should form a boundary throughout its length, but the other actual boundary-lines of Oxfordshire are not such as we should have expected, and nothing is known of the reasons which caused them to be chosen.

From 912 to the end of the century the chronicle has only two entries relating to the county. One is in 924: 'In this year King Eadweard died in Mercia at Farndon: Ælfweard, his son, very shortly died at Oxford, and their bodies lie at Winchester.' Of the circumstances of Ælfweard's death nothing transpires. The

other entry is in 977: "This year, after Easter (Ap. 8) was the great gemot at Kyrtlingtun; and there died Bishop Sideman, by sudden death, on the 2nd of the Kalends of May (Ap. 30). He was Bishop of Devonshire, and he desired that his body's resting-place might be at Crediton at his episcopal see. Then commanded King Edward and Archbishop Dunstan that he should be conveyed to St. Mary's Monastery, which is at Abingdon, and so it was also done; and he is also honourably buried on the north side of St. Paul's Porch.'

This gemot, or council, seems to have been important, as the entry implies that the King, Archbishops, and Bishops all were there; but nothing is known as to the reasons for its being convened, or for its being held at Kirtlington instead of Oxford.

In this latter part of the tenth century history was repeating itself in an extraordinary manner. The great statesman Dunstan had passed away, and the weakling Æthelred was on the throne. The Danes had swept all treaties to the winds, and began again the old system of landing from their ships upon the coast and harrying the surrounding country. The same old spots were selected for landing that they had known in the ninth century. Wessex was attacked, and the familiar names of Thanet and Southampton and Portland reappear as landing-places for the foe, whose progress inland was marked, as in times past, by ruined convents and burnt cities, and by all the other attendant scenes of pillage and rapine. 'The host' of Danes walking up and down through the land and ravaging was a spectre of which the memory lingered in England for centuries. The miserable shifts to which Æthelred was put, the tangle of inexplicable treacheries, the half-hearted and disorganized attempts at defence, the beginning of 'buying off the Dane,' and the constantly-increasing payments, need not be told again.

In 1002, this unready King bought off the Danes by an enormous payment of £24,000, and also granted leave to some of them to settle in Wessex. Almost immediately after he seems to have conceived a most foolish scheme of retaliation, and gave orders that on St. Brice's Day in that year (November 13, 1002) all the Danes in his dominions were to be put to death. There is no evidence to show how widely the cruel work was carried out, but in towns where there was any recognisable Danish population a large proportion probably perished, and there is, unhappily, proof that this was the case in Oxford. In a cartulary of St. Frideswide's Monastery there is a document which purports to be a transcription of a charter granted by Æthelred to the community in 1004. In it the King is made to 'restore' to the

rebuilt monastery certain lands and rights, and generally to reconstitute it. The tragedy which had been enacted in 1002 is incidentally alluded to as having been the occasion of the destruction of the older monastic buildings:

'It is certainly well known to all who live in this country how that a decree went forth from me, with the counsel of my nobles and rulers, that all the Danes—who had multiplied in this island like tares among corn—should be killed by a most just destruction; and this decree was carried out to the death. But as many of the Danes as dwelt in the aforesaid city, striving to avoid death, broke the doors and bolts and entered this sanctuary of Christ by force, and thought to make it a refuge and bulwark for themselves against those who dwelt in the city and those who dwelt outside it. But all the people followed them, and endeavouring to turn them out, and not being able, were constrained to fling fire upon the timber-work, and so burnt, as it seems, this church, with its ornaments and books,' etc.

William of Malmesbury adds that it was in the tower of the church that the Danes made their last stand, and it is quite possible that St. Frideswide's might have had a 'Saxon' tower of stone, or perhaps of wood; but the description is sad and graphic enough without this detail. It must have been a tragic scene, and we can imagine that the memory of it would not readily fade from the hearts of 'Danish kin' in other parts of England.

Vengeance was not far off. In 1005 the Danes were in Exeter. In 1006 they were encamped on the old grounds of Ashdown and Cwichelmslœwe, that knew them a century and a half earlier. In 1009 'the host' poured suddenly through the unknown depths of the Chiltern forests, marched down past unresisting Dorchester, and sacked and burnt Oxford. Half the squalid wooden houses, of which 'the town' was made up, were left a smouldering heap, the palisades round the mound were broken down, and the stone castle which the Lady of the Mercians and Eadward had raised a century earlier was stormed, sorely damaged and left deserted. Next year 'the host' marched again through Oxfordshire, but seems not to have thought the scarred and ruined town worth visting.

The end was near at hand. In 1013 came Sweyn, most ruthless of all ravagers. 'After he came over Watling Street,' wrote the chronicler, 'his host wrought the most evil that any host might.' 'Whilst his men were ravening like maddened wild beasts,' said Florence of Worcester, 'he came to Oxford, and got possession of it sooner than he thought to.' The men of Oxford had had little time even to patch up their castle, and they had but small heart to make a fight of it with Sweyn; there is no

wonder that he got the town sooner than he expected. So in 1013 Sweyn, forcing Oxford and Winchester to 'receive his laws,' was King of England, and Ethelred the Unready fled oversea. Sweyn did not live long to enjoy his triumphs, for death overtook him the very next year (1014), and the witan recalled Ethelred, under promise of amendment.

On the stage of English history there are perhaps a score or two of actors whose names are impressed so deeply on the imagination of youth as to be proof against the oblivion of middle age. Their actions are so superlatively good or bad that, though we may forget the details, their names, like Bible characters, seem to us personifications of virtue or vice, of wisdom or folly. Ethelred the Unready* is certainly one of these typical characters; but with his vacillation and cowardice, which handed over England to the Dane, there is intimately associated a name darker and wickeder than his, Eadric Streona, Eadric the Gainer. It seems a matter for consideration whether all the crimes which are attributed to Eadric could actually have been committed by him, they are so numerous; but the fall of Ethelred was certainly very largely due to his perfidious counsels and to his repeated treachery in the field. Judging from analogy, we might even feel inclined to attribute to Eadric's advice the massacre of St. Brice, in 1002; but however that may be, he certainly was the author of a foul deed which sullied Oxford in 1015.

Ethelred had been recalled after Sweyn's death. He had promised to reform his ways, but had not done so, and the old buying off of the Dane was at once resumed. In 1015 a great council of the nation was held at Oxford, and this fact shows how the place had grown in importance since the castle was built. At this council the great Danish thanes of the seven burghs,† Sigeferth and Morkere, were present, probably as representing the seven shires attached to the burghs, and Eadric, under some lying pretext, enticed them into his power, and had them secretly murdered. Ethelred seized their possessions at once, and Aldgitha (Sigeferth's widow) was sent a prisoner to the convent at Malmesbury.

Ethelred's end came soon after; he died in April, 1016. His son, the Etheling Eadmund ('Ironsides') was a man of very different spirit. He had married the widow Aldgitha apparently against Ethelred's will, and no doubt with a view to obtain a

* The epithet means, of course, of perverse counsel, and not 'unprepared,' though the latter signification would be apt enough.

† Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Lincoln, Stamford, with York and Chester.

strong position in the five burghs and Sigeferth's territory. On his father's death, Eadmund showed something of Alfred's prowess in fighting the Danes, and faced them successfully in five great battles within a few weeks. But the Fates were too strong for him, and the situation was lost beyond repair. The growing strength of the foe and Eadric's desertion at Assandun led him to come to terms with Cnut for the division of England, somewhat on the lines of the old 'Treaty of Wedmore.' This agreement was made at the Island of Olney, in the Severn, near Gloucester. After its conclusion Eadmund turned east towards London, and reached Oxford on the way. Here he seems to have slept, and here on the night of November 30 (St. Andrew's Day) he was probably murdered by agents of the old traitor, Eadric. Henry of Huntingdon gives the details of the unsavoury story, and tells how Eadric's son hid at his father's bidding in the filth, and with two dagger-thrusts brought Eadmund, 'the terrible and most dreaded by his foes,' to an end as ignominious and piteous as that of Eglon at the hand of Ehud.

On Eadmund's death Cnut was at once acknowledged King of England, and in 1018 another gemot was held at Oxford, and at it 'both Danes and Angles were agreed for Edgar's law.' This was indeed a great tribute to Dunstan's policy and to the firm and just rule of Edgar the Peaceful, the blessings of whose seventeen years' reign were not yet forgotten. Oxford was evidently growing a place of note, or it would not have been chosen as the site of a gemot so momentous as that of 1018. It is probable that its centrality, the command of the river which it possessed, and the fact of its being in some sort a neutral territory or march between Wessex and Mercia, were the chief circumstances that led to its selection. It is true that Mercians and West Saxons were now nominally amalgamated, but the traditional difference between the kingdoms lingered on, and it still seemed, no doubt, convenient to choose a spot for a general gemot that lay on the borders of these two great divisions.

Again (in 1036) a gemot was here held under most critical circumstances. Its business was to choose a successor to Cnut, but the questions there debated and the contest for power between Earl Leofric of the Danish party and Earl Godwine of the English party are matters of general history. A compromise was come to: Harold got the North and Harthacnut the South, but neither lived long to enjoy his success. Harold died at Oxford in 1040, and Harthacnut at a drinking bout in 1042, and so 'the Frenchman' Edward was called to the throne.

However French by education, the Confessor was good English

by birth, for his mother, Ymma,* bore him in an Oxfordshire hamlet. Some seven miles above Oxford, on the Cherwell, lies the village of Islip, often a goal for boating-parties on long summer evenings, and sometimes reached by Oxford skaters in a hard frost. It is not known how Ethelred's Queen came to be there at the time of Edward's birth, and the fact is only learnt incidentally from a charter confirming the gift of Islip by the Confessor to his new abbey of St. Peter at Westminster. 'I bid you know,' the charter runs, 'that I have given Christ and St. Peter at Westminster that cotlif [hamlet] that I was born in, by name Githeslepe.' There is no question that Githeslepe is the Oxfordshire Islip, for it is referred to in many subsequent monastic documents, and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster are still Lords of the Manor, and present to the living to this day. The manor was very probably part of Ymma's private property, for the same charter says that she made it over to Edward 'upon his first birthday for a provision.' From the fact of Edward being born at Islip it was assumed that Ethelred had there a palace. But whatever shelter Ymma found there was probably in some very unpretentious wooden structure, though remains of buildings which were construed into a 'palace' were standing at Islip as late as the present century. These were on the north of the church, at the back of the Red Lion Inn, and here was also a small Early English chapel, desecrated at the Rebellion. The font, which has found its way after many vicissitudes to Middleton Stoney, near Bicester, has always been faithfully pointed out as that in which the Confessor was baptized (although really *circa* 1380), and bears on it a late inscription hard to decipher:

> 'This sacred font Saint Edward first receav'd.
> From womb to grace, from grace to glory, went
> His virtuous life. To this fair Isle bequeathed,
> Prase . . . and to us but lent.
> Let this remaine, the trophies of his fame—
> A King baptized from hence a Saint became.'

In spite of his early introduction to the county, no record survives to connect the Confessor again with Oxford or Oxfordshire during his reign of a quarter of a century. It is as late as 1065 that we have the entry of another great gemot at Oxford. Godwine had died in 1053; his son Harold was Earl of Wessex; another son (Tostig) was Earl of Northumbria. But in 1065 the Northern province rose against Tostig, and chose Morkere to be their Earl in his place. This Northumbrian insurrection was

* Ymma, or Emma, being an outlandish name, had to be Saxonized into Ælfgifu.

serious enough, and the gemot at Oxford was called to decide upon the whole matter. Harold's policy was one of conciliation; he tried his best to effect a compromise at the gemot, but was forced by circumstances to advise that Morkere should be confirmed in Northumbria, and so Tostig fled oversea. This decision, come to at Oxford on St. Simon and St. Jude's Day (October 28), 1065, was most momentous in its issue, for it was the banished Tostig's effort to regain his earldom that distracted Harold's attention, and took him away to the North at the time of William's invasion. It was Tostig and Hardrada, beaten as they were at Stamford Bridge, that went far to win Hastings for William and to lose Harold his life and crown. So the sun of the Saxon dynasty set; 'Harold was the last English King that sat on the English throne.'

For six centuries there had been little respite in England from incessant fighting, from tyranny and treachery, from insurrection and invasion, from pillage, burning, and slaughter. The tale of restless anarchy is at times so perplexing as to be almost incredible. Yet all the while progress had been going on with periodic reactions. Long before the Saxon invaders of the fifth and sixth centuries had made their way to the west of the island in their crusade against Roman civilization, this same irrepressible civilization had attacked them again in the rear. The indirect influence of Roman culture had begun to make itself felt on the sea-rovers almost from the moment of their first settlement in Thanet. The intercourse with the Continent across the narrow Straits of Dover had never been long interrupted, and the humanizing force of the old order kept filtering into Britain at this point, and gradually softening in its influx all it touched. A little later came the more definitely civilizing agency of the Church, and then the short period of Britain's severance from Rome and of isolation from the Continent was past, the savagery of Saxons and Danes was in turn overcome and absorbed, and the island was gradually linked to the source of all civilization by golden bands which have since been weakened and strengthened, but never wholly cast off. The Church at this time was of inestimable value to the cause of progress, not so much from the superiority of the doctrines she taught, for it is doubtful whether this amounted to very much in practice, but because she was an ark or asylum in which the elements of art and civilization were preserved through all the storms of war, and because by her means Roman civilization triumphed over the world more decisively than even Roman arms had done in time past.

Christianity made some show in Oxfordshire at an early date. Augustine's mission in 596 was entirely confined in its effect to Kent, but Birinus, probably a Milanese priest, sent on a mission to the West Saxons, went further afield. He seems to have been an intrepid and devoted man, and his piety was rewarded by the conversion* and baptism of Cynegils, the West Saxon King. An entry of the chronicle, 635, confirmed by Bede, shows that this baptism happened at Dorchester-on-Thame.

Birinus seems to have fixed the stool or seat of his bishopric at Dorchester, but the reason for his doing so is not obvious. Perhaps its fortifications and the fact of its Roman occupation still lent it a certain importance which attracted Birinus. His mission was to the West Saxons, and Dorchester was at the best on the very frontier of their territory, and probably at this time actually a part of Mercia. Again, the circumstances of Cynegils' baptism are curious, though they are narrated with a precision that points to the chronicler having made use of a contemporary record kept at Dorchester, but now lost. The sponsor of the Wessex King was Oswald of Northumbria, a strange conjunction indeed. That stout old pagan, Penda, was on the Mercian 'throne,' who defeated and killed Oswald a little later at Maserfield, and it is difficult to understand how he allowed these Christian ceremonies to go on at Dorchester if it was really a part of Mercian territory. However, Cynegils was no doubt baptized there, and the memory of Birinus is probably preserved in Berens Hill, on the west slopes of Chiltern.

Birinus died about 650, and then the history of the bishopric is very hard to trace. The formation of the Wessex dioceses of Sherborne and Winchester, and the reputed partition of Mercia into bishoprics by Archbishop Theodore, detracted very much from the importance of the See of Dorchester. The Bishop's seat seems to have been moved to Leicester, and we hear most of that bishopric (under the jurisdiction of which Oxfordshire probably lay) during the ninth and tenth centuries. But about 950 not only did the Bishop's stool revert to Dorchester, but an enormous increase of territory was given to the diocese. Leofwin, then Bishop of Lindsey, first amalgamated Leicester with his own diocese, and then joined the two to Dorchester, transferring his seat to the little town on the Thame. This takes the diocesan history of Oxfordshire up to the time of the Conquest, when the whole district formed part of the gigantic and very wealthy

* 'Conversions' were, it is to be feared, sometimes lightly made and evanescent in their effect. If the King was converted, the people followed his creed as a matter of course.

bishopric of Dorchester, with limits reaching from the Thames to the Humber.

But there were other factors in the ecclesiastical history besides the bishopric. Before Bede's day monasteries and nunneries existed in England, though mostly in the North. But there is some reason to believe that the nunnery of St. Frideswide was founded at Oxford about the year 727. In the preamble of the document already quoted, which showed how the conventual church was rebuilt in 1004, after the Danes had been burnt in it, there is a narrative of the original foundation of the religious house. One Didanus, 'King of Oxford,' gives the site to his daughter, St. Frideswide, the most holy virgin, and raises there a nunnery for her. William of Malmesbury supplements the account by a story of Frideswide being sought in marriage by a King whose suit she rejected, dedicating her virginity to Christ. Finding her lover importunate, she flies into the wilds by Oxford, and, when he still follows her, strikes him with blindness, but on his repentance gives him his sight again. There is nothing improbable either in there being one Dida, a sub-King of the Oxfordshire district at this time, or in his building there a nunnery for his daughter, and St. Frideswide's nunnery may be thus considered to date from the first half of the eighth century. It afterwards became a monastery instead of a nunnery, but at what date is uncertain: Augustinian canons replaced the monks; the relics of St. Frideswide added glory to the foundation, and it grew into a very celebrated house. In the document however, giving an account of the rebuilding in 1004, the lands belonging to the monastery are rehearsed; but are of small extent, and they had not increased at the time of the Domesday survey.

CHAPTER IV.

THE NORMANS.

THERE are no sufficient data to determine the precise manner in which Oxfordshire fell under the Norman dominion. Eadwine and Morkere, Earls of Mercia, gave their adhesion to William in November, 1066, and it seems likely that Oxfordshire, too, submitted at that time as a part of Mercia. It is generally said that William the Conqueror besieged Oxford, but beyond a transcriber's error, who wrote Oxonia for Exonia (Exeter), there seems no direct authority for such a statement.* There is, of course, no proof that Oxford was not besieged, and a siege and assault would form a ready explanation for the grievous state of disrepair and general dilapidation in which the city was found at the Domesday survey (1085), but, on the whole, the probabilities are against the siege theory.

At the time of the Conquest the county was still deeply wooded; the roads were few and very bad, and communication correspondingly difficult. The towns or villages were small, and of them Oxford itself was unquestionably the most important. Its commanding position on the river, and its being the meeting-place of the two main roads of the district, running respectively east and west and north and south, had already enabled it to outstrip such rivals as Abingdon and Wallingford. Of other places in the neighbourhood the most noteworthy were probably Banbury, Bampton, Bensington, Burford, Deddington, Eynsham, and Abingdon and Wallingford in Berkshire.

Before the Conquest, Wigod the Saxon, Lord of Wallingford, and cupbearer to Edward the Confessor, had possessed a predominating influence in this district. It is rather difficult to say what his exact official position was, but he owned great estates in Oxfordshire and the neighbouring counties. Wigod was one of the few Saxons who managed to maintain wealth and rank through

* Parker's 'Early History of Oxford,' p. 195.

the convulsion of the Norman invasion. We do not know what special measures he employed to conciliate William, but though means were no doubt found to limit his power and influence, and though much was taken from him, yet much remained, and his daughter and heiress Ealdgytha married Robert D'Oily, one of William's great barons.

In the early Norman period Robert D'Oily is the central figure of the Oxfordshire canvas; he stands a head and shoulders higher than anyone else. At the Domesday survey Robert is returned as holding some thirty-four manors in Oxfordshire alone, and fifteen or sixteen in other neighbouring counties, that brought his total possessions up to fifty manors. The principles, if there were any at all, which governed the allotment of land to the Norman grandees at the Conquest have not been ascertained; the distribution seems to have been more or less arbitrary; and the amount of land allotted to any individual depended, no doubt, to a considerable extent on his own energy in pushing and maintaining his claims. Though D'Oily's possessions could not compare in extent with those of some of the more exceptionally-favoured nobles, such as the Earl of Mortain or Odo of Bayeux, with 600 or 700 manors, or Hugh of Chester or Milo Crispin, with 150 or 100 apiece, yet a tale of fifty manors was not to be despised, and the fact of D'Oily holding more than thirty in Oxfordshire alone gave him a peculiarly strong position in the county. It is not certain how many of his manors were derived from Wigod of Wallingford, but he probably obtained a certain number as a dower on his marriage with Ealdgytha, and a great many more on his father-in-law's death.

D'Oily's marriage with Ealdgytha may have been a very prosaic matter, a *mariage de convenance* arranged by William and Wigod, with no reference to the principal actors in it; but the situation is romantic enough to make us hope that it was otherwise, and to picture the Saxon Lord of Wallingford saved by the beauty of his daughter and the chivalric admiration of the Norman adventurer. Whether it was so or not, the name of Wigod was, at any rate, held in kindly remembrance by the D'Oilys, and we find a Wigod D'Oily second Prior of Oseney two or three generations later.

D'Oily was 'Constabularius' of Oxford, and although it is not easy to define this post too closely, yet it corresponded to what we should call a governorship, and placed him in a position of unequivocal superiority, military and civil, over Oxford and the surrounding district. On the whole, he seems to have used his power for good purposes, and to have benefited the town and country committed to his charge. It was no time for a milk-and-

water policy: William's position was too insecure to allow him to entrust provincial government to any except strong and unflinching hands. D'Oily was a stern soldier, and although there is nothing to show that the Oxfordshire district was ever exceptionally troublesome or rebellious, yet he must have realized that the work before him was no slight one. The first precaution adopted by the Norman Constabularius, here and elsewhere throughout the kingdom, was to assure himself of an offensive and defensive base, and to establish one of those castles which became afterwards so remarkable a feature of the Norman occupation. At Oxford there had already been built a 'castle,' about 910, by Æthelflæd, the Lady of the Mercians, which consisted probably of earthworks and ditches surrounding the great artificial mound which exists to this day. These rudimentary fortifications were immensely strengthened by D'Oily. The exact date (1071) of the commencement of the building operations is preserved in the Oseney Abbey chronicle, but little is known of the form of his castle. It is probable that he built a stone wall on the lines of the old enceinte, and strengthened it at intervals with bastions; and it is possible that the great tower which strikes the eye to-day in that somewhat dreary tract by the railway-station, was built by him as one of these bastion towers to command the western approaches of the eleventh-century town. This castle was the first stone building of any importance that Oxford had seen, and from that time to this the great uncouth block of masonry which we know, with its rude work and marked *batter*, has stood looking down upon the town, grim and unchanged through all the changes of eight centuries. The castle had to be built, money had to be raised to build it, and the means adopted for this purpose were possibly harsh. At any rate, D'Oily fell foul of the Church, and is soundly abused by the monkish historians. Preaching on the text, 'The love of money grows, as grows the money's self,' the chronicler of Abingdon says:

'In his lust of money he harried the churches everywhere, but especially the Abbey of Abingdon; to wit, he took away their possessions, and sued them constantly at law, and sometimes put them at the mercy of the King. Amongst other evil deeds, he took away a certain mead that lay outside the walls of Oxford with the King's consent, and made it over to the soldiers of the castle for their use. This loss grieved the brethren of Abingdon more than any other evil.'

But D'Oily had no natural antipathy to the Church, and his exactions were due, probably, not so much to choice as to necessity. As soon as his position was firmly secured, he turned from a per-

secutor to a benefactor, and built churches instead of seizing meadows. This happy change was attributed by the chronicler to an illness sent at the monks' prayers to correct him, and to an evil dream, in which he saw himself arraigned before the Blessed Virgin, and tormented by imps. 'As before that dream he was a plunderer of churches and of the poor, so after it he was made a repairer of churches and a helper of the poor, and a doer of many good works. Amongst others the great bridge on the north side of Oxford was built by him.'

This bridge was the Hithe Bridge, which led across the Thames out of Oxford on the north-west, and was commanded by the existing tower. Besides this tower there are other traces of D'Oily's work remaining in the town. In 1074 he built a chapel or church of St. George in the Castle; 'he also repaired, at his own cost, other ruined parish churches within and without the walls of Oxford.' These parish churches were probably St. Mary Magdalene, St. Michael's, and St. Peter-in-the-East. The fortress tower of St. Michael's, abutting on the old north gate, which here spanned the corn-market, is very remarkable, with its long-and-short work and baluster windows. The chancel of St. Peters-in-the-East is of vast solidity and wonderfully impressive, as is also the crypt below it. The latter has often been assigned to a much earlier date, but though its plan at the west might favour such a supposition, it seems safer to assign the existing building to a period later than Robert D'Oily.

There is another famous soldier of the Conqueror whose name must be mentioned for his connection with Oxfordshire. Roger of Ivry* and Robert D'Oily were 'sworn brethren, confederated or bound each to other by faith and Sacrament to come to the conquest of England with King William bastard.'

There are other instances recorded of such close companionship, and Robert D'Oily and Roger D'Ivry were on terms of intimacy such as to warrant their being styled 'brothers' in various charters. A sworn friendship of this kind implied, perhaps, not only a fellowship in perils of arms, but also an understanding that such profits as were reaped from conquest should be shared between them, as far at least as was consonant with the supreme will of the King. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Roger D'Ivry with an influence in the county only less than that of his brother in chivalry, Robert D'Oily. He holds in Domesday twenty-three manors in Oxfordshire, and nineteen more in adjoining counties. These two names of D'Oily and D'Ivry naturally occur again and again in tracing the descent of Oxfordshire properties.

* Ivry-la-Bataille, Eure.

The Domesday survey was commenced in 1085, and finished in 1086. In the series of counties of which statistics are given, Oxfordshire occupies the fourteenth place. The record was made solely for purposes of taxation, and whilst it gives details of the highest interest, it omits other facts which would have been at least of equal importance to know, and which are now hopelessly lost. In most of the counties in the Domesday survey some more detailed particulars are given of the most important town (or towns, as the case may be) of the county, and from this it may be gathered that, except Oxford, there was no other town worth any special notice.

The history of Oxfordshire, in fact, is at this period so completely the history of Oxford itself that the city requires some more detailed description.

About Oxford such details are noted in Domesday as would be of service in comparing the revenue produced by the city in 1085 with that produced in the time of Edward the Confessor. It is not known in what year during the Confessor's reign the estimate of revenue was taken, and as Edward sat on the throne for twenty-three years there might be an interval of forty years' change between the date of the estimate known as *tempore Edwardi regis* and that of the Domesday. As a matter of fact the city had much decreased in population during the interval, and appears to have been generally in a lamentable state of disrepair. Domesday does not give the number of inhabitants, and this can only be conjectured from the number of houses. Before the Conquest (in whatever year the estimate *tempore Edwardi* was taken), there were in Oxford 721 houses, representing perhaps a population of 3,500 to 4,000. But at Domesday only 243 of these houses remained inhabited, and the number of inhabitants could not well have exceeded 1,500. The pre-Conquest number of 721 houses had placed Oxford among the foremost towns of England as regarded population, comparing with 1,036 in York and 1,150 in Lincoln. But at Domesday, out of these 721 houses, no less than 478 are returned as unoccupied. The word used to describe this state is *vastæ*—that is, waste or void—and seems rather elastic in its signification, meaning on occasion either unoccupied, dilapidated, or absolutely destroyed. This great destruction of property has been generally attributed to a siege by William himself, and to the punishment following an obstinate resistance. But it has been observed that there is no sufficient authority for such a siege, and the cause of the dilapidation is perhaps to be sought in the intestine troubles which immediately preceded the Conquest. It will be remembered that in 1065 Edwin and Morkere pressed

south with a rebel mob, and by marching on Northampton caused the gemot to be removed from thence to Oxford. Afterwards they pushed on 'like a whirlwind or storm' as far as Oxford, and this might have been the occasion of the great destruction of houses.* The damage done was such as would have been expected rather, perhaps, from a predatory mob than from the regular siege of a town where the castle lay at one extremity, and not in the midst. The number of houses (478) set down as void is certainly enormous, and although dilapidation and destruction are recorded in many other towns, in very few do they reach the same disastrous proportions as in Oxford, where only one-third of all the houses remained inhabited. York, indeed, is an exception, and the damage done there exceeded even that at Oxford; but this is not to be wondered at, for York had been raided by the rebels when Tostig was outlawed in 1065, and was besieged by William in 1068.

However the destruction of houses is to be accounted for, it is clear that at the time of Domesday Oxford had but a very small population. This is surprising in the face of the political importance which the place had acquired. Its commanding position as a frontier town, lying on the great waterway which separated Wessex and Mercia, had singled it out as a convenient central place of meeting for the discussion of any affairs touching the whole of England. In the eleventh century it was again and again the scene of most important national assemblies, and it is singular to find that as regards the number of its houses it had distinctly retrograded since the days of the Confessor.

In extent it probably corresponded more or less exactly to the line of the walls that were afterwards reared in the Middle Ages. On the west Oxford reached to the castle and the river; on the east to the end of New College Gardens, where a considerable portion of the walls is standing, and still maintained by the college under special agreement. The south wall ran at the back of Merton College, where portions are to be seen abutting on the meadows, and crossed St. Aldate's nearly opposite the great gate of Christ Church. The north wall ran from St. Michael's Church in the corn-market along the back of the houses in Broad Street, till it joined the tower of New College. Certain houses are mentioned in Domesday as specially exempted from the payment of dues, because they were charged with obligation of repairing the wall, and for this reason are designated as 'mural mansions.' It is not at all certain what the nature of the 'wall' was at this time, but the fortifications possibly consisted mainly

* *Cf.* Parker's 'Early History of Oxford.'

of an earth rampart, defended with deep ditches filled with water. On this rampart or on the outside of it, as a retaining wall, there was no doubt some stonework; but it seems to have been of no special importance, as in Henry III.'s reign the whole was pulled down to make way for those medieval walls of which the remains exist.

D'Oily strengthened the walls all round, but more especially on the north by the erection of the fortress tower of St. Michael. Whether he built anything on the top of the great earth mound of the Lady of the Mercians is uncertain. It seems scarcely likely that he would omit to utilize so commanding a point, but no satisfactory evidence of his having done so remains; and it is possible that the artificial hill was considered too loose in structure to bear the weight of one of the massive keeps common to later Norman design.* The castle at Oxford was of exceptional importance, as being, with Windsor and Wallingford, one of the three great positions that commanded the valley of the Upper Thames. The badness of the roads enhanced the importance of the waterway, and water-carriage appears to have been used by preference whenever it was possible. After D'Oily's evil dream it was by the river that he went to Abingdon to make reparation; and the monks afterwards made a profit by blocking the main-stream and exacting a toll of 100 herrings from each boat, using another channel which passed the abbey, and which they kept open.

Within the walls the present main divisions of the city had already begun to take shape; the two great roads running north and south and east and west crossed them as now at right angles in the centre of the city, and became respectively Cornmarket Street and St. Aldate's, High Street and Queen Street. The point of crossing was known as Carfax, the Quatre Voies, and became at a very early period a focus of such municipal life as existed. At Carfax was built the first parish church in Oxford. The story of its building is told in a charter in the chronicle of Abingdon Abbey, and makes Cnut its founder, and its date 1034. There is reason to believe that the document is genuinely set out; and in any case St. Martin's was undoubtedly the earliest parish church, and always enjoyed the privilege of priority, being looked upon as peculiarly the city church.

The Domesday survey only mentions churches incidentally, as their names turn up in connection with points affecting taxation, and as regards St. Martin's, for instance, it is entirely silent. Four churches are mentioned in it—St. Mary the Virgin, St. Michael,

* *Cf.* Parker's 'Early History of Oxford.'

St. Ebbe, and St. Peter. From other evidence it is certain that St. Frideswide, St. Martin, St. George-in-the-Castle, and St. Mary Magdalene were in existence in 1087, and it is probable that the whole number of churches in the city did not fall short of a round dozen at that date.

St. Frideswide's, by far the oldest religious foundation in the place, from some reason or other, does not appear to have made much headway, and the more enterprising monastery of Eynsham had built and continued to serve the Church of St. Ebbe, within a stone's-throw of St. Frideswide's Gate. Two churches of St. Michael stood one at the north and the other* at the south gate, and two churches of St. Peter at the extreme east and west of the city respectively. Robert D'Oily's Church of St. Mary Magdalene was built entirely outside the walls. It formed then, as now, a little island, with the north road running close on both sides east and west of it. These roads have exercised a curious determining influence on the form of the building itself. No part of D'Oily's church, indeed, is now left, unless it be the core of some of the walls; but as the church required enlargement in after-years, it was found impossible to extend it in length, abutting as it does on roads both east and west, and so all additions were made laterally. This accounts for its strangely square plan as seen to-day, and the multiplication of its aisles has given rise to its sobriquet of 'the Archipelago.'

On the whole Oxford was well found in churches considering its population, and there is evidence that by the reign of Henry I. there were certainly sixteen, and probably at least twenty, churches in the city. The age was one of church-building generally. The new Norman landlords were not unmindful of the duties of their position, and built a church on their manor in as matter-of-course a way as they built a barn or a dovecote. The county of Oxford is rich in remains of Norman ecclesiastical architecture, and possesses some 100 churches in the county which exhibit traces of Norman or Transitional architecture, taking the latter to extend to 1175. Where the original building has been removed by later builders, or so altered as to be unrecognisable, the Norman doorways in the nave and the Norman chancel arch often remain. To this latter feature, indeed, a particular reverence seems to have attached, and a Norman chancel arch has not unfrequently been preserved among later and completely incongruous surroundings when every other vestige of Norman work has vanished. Of Norman domestic or even military architecture no traces remain in the county save only Robert D'Oily's tower.

* Destroyed when Christ Church was built.

With the exception of the churches and the castle, there were probably very few stone buildings in Norman Oxford. The houses were almost universally of wood—small, and perhaps squalid.

In Domesday Book are mentioned the owners of nearly all the houses in the city of Oxford, both inhabited and uninhabited. It seems that land-owners in the county were possessed of houses also in the city, and, as a general principle, the larger a man's holding in the shire, the greater number of houses he had in the town. The ratio is not always maintained, but the reason for the practice is easily intelligible. There were no hotels in the town, and it would not be easy to obtain accommodation at short notice. At the same time, there were courts, markets, and a thousand other motives to compel landowners or their representatives to come up to Oxford, and that frequently.

The King held 25 inhabited houses in Oxford at the time of Domesday, but 1 was waste. Of these, no less than 20 were 'mural mansions' charged with the repairs of the walls, 'if the King should so command,' but otherwise free from all taxes. It may be suspected that the repair of the walls was generally a nominal obligation, that the King did *not* 'command,' and that his mansions were made 'mural' so as practically to absolve them altogether from the payment of dues. Robert D'Oily held the very large number of 66 houses, 'as well without as within the walls,' but 16 were waste.* His houses 'without the walls' seem to point to those grouped round his Church of St. Mary Magdalene, and possibly to a population springing up on his Manor of Holywell. The chancel arch of St. Cross at Holywell is early in character, and makes it possible that this church also owes its foundation to D'Oily. Of other large householders in Oxford, Roger D'Ivry had 15 mansions, but 6 were waste. Walter Gifard of Longueville, and Earl of Buckingham (with 10 manors in Oxfordshire and 48 in Bucks), had 17 mansions in Oxford, but 7 were waste.

The Church was very strongly represented with 115 houses in all. Of these the Archbishop of Canterbury held 7, 4 waste; the Bishop of Lincoln 30, 16 waste; the Bishop of Bayeux 18, 4 waste; the Bishop of Winchester 9, 3 waste; the Bishop of Hereford 3, 1 waste; the Bishop of Coutances 2. Abingdon Abbey had 14, but 8 waste; Eynsham Abbey 13, 7 waste; and the great Abbey of St. Edmund at Bury held 1 mansion belonging to Taynton. The canons of St. Frideswide's had 15, 8 waste; and the priests of St. Michael's two.

* He is mentioned in one place as holding 50, and in another 16, and it is probable that the 16 are not included in the 50.

'In the time of King Edward' the King's dues from the city of Oxford amounted to £20 and six sextaries* of honey. At the Domesday the dues had been increased to £60, but the tribute of honey seems to have been remitted. There is a note that when King Edward went on expedition twenty burghers were to go with him in lieu of all the rest, or that the city at a payment of £20 could compound for the exemption of all. Domesday is silent as to the custom in this respect under William, but it is probable that there was no exemption, and that all burghers were liable to be called out.

The last entry in the Domesday account of the town of Oxford is very interesting. It is to the effect that 'All burghers of Oxford have common pasture outside the walls, returning 6 shillings and 8 pence.'

This common pasture is the present Port (= Town) Meadow, which reaches from Oxford as far as Wolvercote, and is bounded on the west by the upper river, and on the east by the Great Western Railway. It is very remarkable that this great tract of common land should have escaped the hands of land-grabbers for 800 years, and be still serving the same purpose to-day as it did in the time of the Conqueror; even Robert D'Oily, who was so prone to annex meadows, laid no hand upon it. It is a grand expanse of level sward, impressive in its vastness (439 acres), and dear to the memories of generations of Oxonians, whether its broad surface be seen from the upper river, shimmering in the heat of summer days and studded with cattle and white flocks of geese; or, when the floods are out, as an inland sea, with fleets of white-sailed boats; or hard-frozen in the winter, with multitudes of skaters and the merry ring of the steel blade echoing far over the fields of ice.

* A sextary = perhaps 1½ pints.

CHAPTER V.

HENRY I. AND STEPHEN.

BY the end of the eleventh century Oxford had altogether outstripped its old rivals, Abingdon, Wallingford, and Eynsham. A variety of causes had contributed to give the place a certain distinction. Its situation on the march between Wessex and Mercia singled it out in the old days as a favourable site for semi-national meetings, where affairs which touched the interests both of North and South could conveniently be discussed. Its accessibility by water at a time when roads were exceedingly bad, and the strength of its military position as commanding the valley of the Upper Thames, added to its importance.

At the beginning of the twelfth century the county found a new importance in its great forests. Oxfordshire had been exceptionally well wooded from the earliest times. Except the rich meadows in the river valleys, the swamps of Otmoor, and the small clearances round towns and villages, the whole district was probably little more than a continuous woodland. On the north lay the chase of Woodstock, merging in the forest of Wychwood; on the north-east, near Bicester, was Bernwood; on the east were Stowood, Beckley, and Shotover; on the south-east ran the wild thickets and dense beech forests on the slopes and tablelands of Chiltern; and on the south Bagley and Cumnor completed the circle. To the sporting instincts of the Norman Kings such forests offered a great attraction, and the comparative easy distance of Oxford from London was an important consideration. Thus, from the beginning of the twelfth century the place began to bask in the favour of Royalty, which was destined to shine upon it continuously until the eclipse of the Commonwealth. John Rous says, indeed, that it was the facility for associating at Oxford with learned men that first drew thither the scholar-King, Henry I.,* but it may be suspected that the pleasure of hunting

* He had been educated in part at Abingdon.

the great woods had at least an equal attraction for him. It is, however, likely that there was already existent at Oxford some germ of an educational system which was afterwards to develop into the University. What precise form it wore at this time is impossible to determine, and some would relegate to a much later period any beginnings of Oxford scholarship.

The question is one which will be discussed later on, but however misty may be the beginnings of the University, the forests, at least, were real, and they appealed irresistibly to Henry. In order to enjoy the pleasures of the chase with more convenience, he built on the north side of Oxford city the Palace of Beaumont (de Bello Monte), and also a hunting-lodge at Woodstock. Beaumont soon became a favourite royal residence and a place of some importance. It lay outside the city wall on the north, but the only trace of it now surviving is the name of Beaumont Street, though the present cattle-market is said to occupy the palace bowling-green.

The royal lodge of Woodstock* was no doubt built on the site of an older manor-house. There is a tradition of Alfred having there translated Boethius, and Ethelred the Unready had also perhaps a residence in the neighbourhood. Henry's new house was of smaller size than Beaumont, but was surrounded by a great park seven miles in circumference. John Rous, the chronicler, notes that this park was the first in England to be encircled with a stone wall, and descants on the hardship and cruelties involved in the afforestation. Several villages were, he says, destroyed to provide stones for the wall. The story is, however, improbable, as there was certainly a wood there before, and the population, if any existed, could only have been of an insignificant description, and that not housed in stone. The abundance of oolitic stone in the neighbourhood would be quite sufficient reason for making the wall of that material, and the 'dry' stone walls in lieu of hedges are to this day a prominent feature of North Oxfordshire landscapes. Woodstock soon became a favourite resort with Henry I., and to its attractions he added a menagerie, of which William of Malmesbury narrates: 'He was extremely fond of the wonders of distant countries, begging with great delight from foreign Kings lions, leopards, lynxes, or camels, animals which England does not produce. He had a park called Woodstock, in which he used to foster favourites of this kind. He had placed there also a creature called a porcupine, sent to him by William of Montpelier.'

* For these and other particulars of Woodstock throughout this book the reader is referred to Mr. Marshall's exhaustive 'History of Woodstock' (Oxon, 1875).

It was in Woodstock Park that Robert Bloet, Bishop of Lincoln, died suddenly in June, 1123. He was riding on one side of the King, with Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, on the other, when, being seized with a sudden faintness, he cried, 'My Lord King, I am a-dying!' and slipped from his horse. The King alighted, and, taking him in his own arms, carried him to a house hard by, where he expired.

There are records of constant visits paid to Woodstock by Henry I. all through the latter part of his reign; and it was probably there that he received in 1126 the news of the assassination of Charles by his nobles in the Minster of Bruges, and of William the Clito, Henry's enemy, having succeeded him as Earl of Flanders.

A very important and far-reaching change in the ecclesiastical constitution of the district had taken place before the date of Henry's accession. Rémi, or Remigius, almoner of the Benedictine monastery of Fécamp, came on William's expedition with a ship and twenty fighting men. The Conqueror promised him the first bishopric vacant, and gave him that of Dorchester on the death of Bishop Wulfwy in 1067. The seat of the bishopric was removed from Dorchester to Lincoln by Bishop Remigius in 1087. A variety of reasons have been brought forward to account for this step on the Bishop's part. Some say that the change was made in deference to a decision of the Synod of London in 1072 to conform to certain ancient Papal decrees, which forbade the placing of Bishops' seats in very small towns (*villulæ*) or villages*; others, that the position of Dorchester was not sufficiently central to command so vast a diocese. It is difficult however to see that the one place should have any advantage over the other, so far as centrality is concerned, and it may have been a military consideration which exercised the preponderating influence in Remigius' decision. His position as Bishop of such an enormous diocese was one of great weight and importance, more from a temporal than from a spiritual point of view. It was necessary that he should be able either to act with decision or to defend himself on occasion from attack, for the county was still in a very unsettled state. Dorchester not only possessed no fortifications which would offer resistance to an angry countryside, but the situation of the place itself was low and difficult to defend. Lincoln, on the other hand, occupied a naturally masterful military position, which Art had rendered much stronger by the erection of William's great Norman castle. Both places were of Roman origin, but while the station in the Thames Valley had

* Thus a Bishop's seat was moved first from Elmham to Thetford, and from thence in turn to Norwich. Chichester similarly superseded Selsey.

dwindled in its decay to little more than a squalid village, the station upon the hill (the Lindum Colonia), that overlooked the Trent, was still one of the most important of all English towns. So the Bishop went north to Lincoln, and for the second time in history the Diocese of Dorchester became a thing of the past. The new Diocese of Lincoln was of vast dimensions, including no less than seven counties; but Remigius was a man of energy, and even after his removal did not allow his care of Oxfordshire to slumber. For four centuries and a half the county had indeed no bishopric within its borders, and its ecclesiastical annals are to be sought in the archives of Lincoln; but both Remigius and his successors seem to have had an affection for Oxfordshire, and to have constantly honoured it with their presence. At Lincoln Remigius built a new minster, the massive grandeur of which is still attested by portions of the west front; but he died in 1092, probably on the very day before the consecration of his church.

For the better management of the diocese, he appointed seven Archdeacons, one to supervise each county, the name of the Archdeacon of Oxford being Alfred. Though the number of parishes in Oxfordshire is given in Domesday as 262, no mention is there made of churches, except incidentally, and so the number then existing is quite uncertain: it may, perhaps, have amounted to 100 or 150. The period of the early Norman Kings was fruitful in church-building, and Oxfordshire soon became sprinkled with heavy stone-built churches of the Romanesque style—sometimes apsidal, always dark, with very small round-headed windows high up in the wall, but often possessing a chancel arch or doorway of elaborate if uncouth ornamentation.

On the death of Henry I.—the 'Prince who loved peace, and women, and scholarship'—Oxfordshire came in for a full share of the troubles which befell England under his successor Stephen. The thirty years of Henry's reign had been a period of recuperation and consolidation, and in spite of grumbling chroniclers there is no doubt that the benefit to the land had been incalculable. He had organized the administration both of justice and of finance, he enforced the observance of law with unswerving, if at times cruel, impartiality, he conciliated the Church, and he broke the feudal baronage. But under Stephen much of this good was undone, and England experienced most grievous misrule.

Domesday enumerates only forty-nine castles as existing in England at the time of the survey, and of these thirty had been built by William the Conqueror in pursuance of his policy of erecting in all the principal towns a stronghold which might serve as a base of operation at times of need. In Oxfordshire there

was probably at the date of Stephen's accession only that great castle which Robert D'Oily had built in 1071. But during the anarchy of the wars between the Empress and Stephen, castles sprung up on all sides like mushrooms. The King, knowing his own weakness, tried to win friends to his side by allowing land-owners to fortify their houses; and every local grandee became at once a tyrant, making his castle a stronghold from which he could harass and plunder the neighbourhood at will. Such matters belong of course to the domain of general history, and can be but briefly alluded to here.

The number of castles built in Stephen's reign is variously estimated by chroniclers from 375 to 1,115, though the latter figure is probably quite beyond the mark. In any case, the existence of such robber-nests was an intolerable scourge, and the chaos of rapine and outrage into which the land had fallen is painted by the chroniclers in the darkest colours.

Henry I. was buried at Reading, and Stephen, after attending his obsequies, proceeded to Oxford and held there the Council of 1135. It was an important meeting, and he conciliated the popular favour by the promise of salutary reforms. He was well aware that he could not hope to postpone for any length of time a struggle for the crown with the Empress Matilda, to whose fealty Henry I. had pledged the great nobles; and he realized to the full the insecurity of his position unless he could win the people to his side. The promises made at Oxford were well calculated to gain their support. The galling imposition of the Danegeld was to be done away, the wrongs of the Church were to be remedied, sees and abbacies to be filled as soon as they became vacant, and the cruel rigour of the forest laws to be abated. Such reforms were hailed with delight, and for two years all went well with the new King.

But as the moment of the Empress' attack drew nearer, Stephen's anxiety and jealous suspicion increased, and by his foolish action at the General Council of 1139 he undid the good effect produced by his previous promises. It was at Oxford again that the Council met, and there were present at it the great Bishops, Alexander of Lincoln (the successor of that Robert Bloet who had died so suddenly in Woodstock Park), Roger of Salisbury, and Nigel of Ely. All three of them were united by ties of blood, possessed great power, and held castles in their dioceses. Stephen suspected their fidelity, and a chance fray in the streets of Oxford gave him a pretext for taking action against them. A quarrel arose between the retainers of the Bishop of Salisbury and those of the Earl of Brittany; hard fighting ensued, and the Bishop's men killed a knight. On this the

King summoned all three Bishops before him, and insisted on their making reparation for what had occurred. As a pledge of their loyalty, he demanded the surrender of their castles, and on their refusal he flung them into prison. On this the castles, including Banbury built by Alexander of Lincoln in 1125, were given up, but Stephen's folly had made him a host of enemies, and had alienated the Church.

Then the Empress Maud landed in England and the Civil War began. Oxfordshire had a very full share in the fighting, as it was destined to have again five centuries later in the Civil War of Charles I. Generally speaking the West of England was for the Empress, London and the East for the King. Banbury and Richard de Camville's castle at Middleton were in Stephen's hands; Maud held Oxford, Woodstock, and Bampton.

In 1141 Maud was driven out of London, and took refuge in Oxford Castle, which Robert D'Oily the younger (nephew of the famous old Norman Constable, and spoken of by the chroniclers as a soft man, fonder of women than of fighting) had given up to her. Stephen pursued her to Oxford, and took up his residence at Beaumont, just outside the castle on the north side. Thence he besieged the Empress vigorously, and after some eight weeks the food in the castle gave out, and the besiegers were put to the sorest straits. Surrender at last became inevitable, but the day before the castle was given up, Maud made her escape.

There was a severe frost; the rivers and flooded meadows were hard frozen, and deep snow had fallen afterwards and covered everything. In the dead of night Maud with one or two attendant knights slipped out of a postern, and being all of them clothed in white, they escaped the notice of the outposts as they crossed the snow. The surroundings seem strangely familiar, and it requires no great effort of imagination to picture the wintry scene, the level mantle of sparkling snow, the frozen river and ditches, and perhaps a searching wind sweeping over the levels of the Thames Valley as pitilessly as it does to-day. The little party made their way on foot across the marshes to Bagley Hill, and climbing it came down on Abingdon, where they found horses to carry them to Wallingford. Here Maud found shelter and a welcome from Brien Fitzcount, who had succeeded Milo Crispin as Constable of Wallingford Castle, and who proved himself again and again during the war a loyal and devoted adherent to her cause.

A dreary see-saw of success and defeat was the record of the contending parties for some years, and the district in which Oxford and Wallingford Castles were the chief strategic points, changed hands more than once. The general misery became at

length too heavy to be borne, but it was not till 1153 that the end came. In that year another Council was held at Oxford, and terms of peace agreed upon. The Empress had finally retired, and death had removed some principal actors from the scene. Prince Eustace, Robert of Gloucester, and Milo of Hereford, had all passed away. Men were sick of the fighting and longed for order and rest. Stephen adopted Henry II. as his son and heir, and the Barons swore fealty to the Prince, whilst reserving their allegiance to the King so long as he should live. A general amnesty and reform was promised, but Stephen had little time to enjoy the blessing of peace, for he died in 1154.

As the close of the eleventh century had seen the removal of the bishopric from Oxford to Lincoln, so the beginning of the twelfth saw an important change of a contrary sort in the foundation of the great Abbey of Osney. The monastery was built by Robert D'Oily the younger, who, as Constable of Oxford Castle, played afterwards a part in the Civil War. The story of its foundation is characteristic of the times. Robert had married an Englishwoman named Edith Forne, who had been a mistress of Henry I.'s youth, and to whom her royal lover had given the Manor of Claydon as a dower. She was walking one day in the riverside meadows that lay outside the walls to the west of the castle, with her father-confessor Ralph. It was a spring morning, and the jays or magpies made a great chattering in the branches. The lady asked her adviser, who understood the language of birds, what their noise meant, and Ralph replied that the seeming birds were but poor souls in purgatory, who thus expressed their pains. The transition of ideas was easy; how could their sad state be remedied, what good work could the lady do to give them ease? Ralph was at her elbow to suggest the building of a religious house, and so Robert D'Oily yielded to his wife's entreaty, and built the Priory of Osney for Austin canons on his low-water meadows west of the castle in the year of grace 1129. At first it was but a modest house enough, but, being rebuilt in the next century, grew at last to be one of the noblest of the religious foundations in the land. The name has been considered, perhaps fancifully, to be equivalent to 'the island in the Ouse,' but this subject has been already discussed in an earlier chapter.

The great group of religious houses in this district, including Abingdon, Eynsham, St. Frideswide's, and Osney, was now nearly complete; only Rewley remained to be added to them in the next century. Stephen gave Eynsham a market; Abingdon obtained the same privilege a little later; St. Frideswide's was shaking off her sloth and acquiring extensive possessions.

Osney is of exceptional importance from a historical point of view, because a valuable chronicle was kept there. With the Conquest the Anglo-Saxon chronicles* may be said to cease, and the records kept in the various abbeys to some extent take their place. The authority of these monastic chroniclers is as variable as their histories are capricious. Sometimes they are correct and trustworthy in local matters, sometimes events are deduced from false archives and forged charters, or from imagination. If a general history is attempted, it is compiled from any historic writer of whose works a copy existed in the abbey library. Abingdon and Osney kept such chronicles; Eynsham and St. Frideswide's kept none, or, if they did, the records have not survived.

One more religious foundation of Stephen's time claims special mention. In the midst of the fighting in 1140, Alexander 'the Munificent,' that great builder and Bishop of Lincoln whom Stephen fell foul of in 1139, turned the old cathedral of Dorchester into a house for Austin canons. It is probable that there was then standing at Dorchester the church built by Bishop Eadnoth a hundred years before, with its long and badly-lighted nave, and perhaps an apsidal termination at the east. How the new canons set to work to build and alter, and how the church thrived under the ægis of the Governors of Wallingford Castle until it grew into the beautiful and fantastic fabric of to-day, must be told elsewhere. It is sufficient for the present to notice its foundation as another instance of the care of a Bishop of Lincoln for the old diocese.

In 1138 was founded the Benedictine nunnery of Godstow by one Editha, who is not to be identified with the wife of Robert D'Oily the younger. An account of its consecration, at which Stephen and his Queen, Alexander of Lincoln, and a brilliant assembly of nobles were present, has been preserved. About the same time Sir Robert Gait, who owned a large property on the north-west of Otmoor, and whose memory is still preserved in the name of the little village Hampton Gay (Gait), built a small Cistercian monastery at Oddington. The site, low on the Otmoor swamps, and even to-day liable to floods, was an unfortunate one, being, as White Kennett observes, 'fitter for an ark than a monastery'; and the convent was transferred a year or two later to Thame by Bishop Alexander. Several other smaller religious houses had also been founded in the county, such as the Templar preceptory at Cowley, and the alien Priory of Cogges, of which mention will be made later.

* See *ante*, p. 42.

CHAPTER VI.

HENRY II.

THE change from the misrule and anarchy of Stephen's reign to the strong government and order of Henry II. must have come to the country generally as an inexpressible relief. Oxfordshire appreciated the change no doubt as much as any part of England, for the county had been the theatre of continual fighting, and must have suffered severely at the hands of both the contending parties.

Henry II. was in every way the opposite of Stephen. He was strong both in body and mind, of untiring energy and perseverance, altogether devoid of sentiment, and unswerving in the pursuit of his ends. He was fond of women, and had a violent, and at times a paroxysmal, temper. His main objects were to make the power of the Crown paramount in England, and to establish his rule on the Continent as head of a great Angevin dominion, including not only England, but also the whole of the western half of France from Calais to the Pyrenees. In the first of these objects he succeeded, but in the second he failed, because the very nature of things rendered any permanent Anglo-French empire an impossibility.

One of Henry's first acts was the suppression of those castles which had sprung up all over the country like evil fungi in the last reign. They were branded under the name of *Adulterine Castles*, and, in spite of vigorous opposition on the part of the Baronage, were for the most part razed to the ground. Gerard de Camville, for instance, had built a castle at Middleton-Stoney, which he had held for the King against the Empress.* But on

* Leland, writing of Middleton, *temp.* Henry VIII., says: 'The village and castle of Middleton in Oxfordshire is 2 miles by west from Burchester; the castle stood hard by the churche. Sum pieces of the walls of it yet a little apeare, but almost the whole of it is overgrowne with Busheys. Sum say this was Basset's Castle, syns Lestrang's and now the Erle of Derbye's. The Lordship is fiftee £ by yere.'

Henry's accession this was ordered to be dismantled as adulterine. The 'castles' at Ardley (probably built by Ranulph Earl of Chester), Swerford, and Somerton (and others no doubt in the county, the names of which are lost), shared the same fate. But the castle which the Fitz-Alans had built at Chipping Norton, Roger D'Ivry's castle at Mixbury, Alexander's castle at Banbury, and Deddington Castle, about the foundation of which little is known, were allowed to survive, the two last becoming royal castles.

The methods which Henry adopted for restraining the power of the Baronage, which had made enormous headway during a dozen years of anarchy, are matters of general history; but two must be briefly alluded to here. Every tenant holding land was obliged by the terms of his tenure to provide an armed and mounted soldier whenever his lord called upon him to do so. It was now decreed that this obligation of service should be redeemable by the lesser tenants at option on payment to the Treasury of a certain sum called scutage.* This innovation proved a very formidable weapon in Henry's hands, for not only did it deprive the Barons of a force of retainers which was a standing menace to the Crown, but it gave to the King money, and an excuse for hiring foreign soldiers who were always ready to do his bidding. The other great measure was the provision of royal agents from the Exchequer, who made regular progresses through the land, primarily to exact the King's taxes, but secondarily to administer justice. This second part of their duties soon became of immense importance, and developed into the system of assizes; whereby the King's justice was carried into the remotest districts and upheld even against the courts of castle and manor. By the Assize of Northampton, 1176, the country was mapped out into six districts, each served by three judges. These divisions correspond in principle with the circuits of to-day, though their number is now increased to eight. Oxfordshire was however allotted to the Home Circuit, instead of to the Western, of which it now forms part.

Some scenes in the great tragedy of the reign, the conflict between Becket and Henry, took place in Oxfordshire. It is said, indeed, that the first collision between them occurred at Woodstock, and that the point of difference had no reference to matters ecclesiastical. It was proposed that a certain tax which had hitherto been paid to the Sheriffs of counties should now be receivable by the Crown. To this Becket demurred, and spoke

* The scutage on a knight's fee was 2 marks; the fee itself varied from 150 to 500 acres.

detailing the objections. Then the King, furious at being bearded by his former Minister, fell into one of those strange outbursts of passion to which his nature was always subject. 'By God's eyes!' he shouted, 'the money shall be paid as revenue, and registered in the King's books.' Becket, equally irritable, and always in his anger forgetful of the dignity of his office, retorted, 'And by God's eyes, while I live, from land of mine no such payment shall be made—of the Church's right, no, not one penny.'*

More important matters of dispute came to the fore, and the King and Archbishop were soon involved in that incessant struggle which only ended in the murder at Canterbury. The main question at issue was the delimitation of the jurisdiction of the temporal and spiritual courts. It was not to be supposed that Henry, who had made his justice paramount both in castle and manor, would allow it to be balked by ecclesiastical immunities. The Church had drawn within the pale of her privilege all the educated classes of the kingdom. Priest and clerk, lawyer and doctor, if they broke the law, were punished, not by the civil, but the ecclesiastical court, and the penalties allotted to them, such as penance and the like, were ridiculously inadequate. It is well known how this egregious state of things was remedied by the Constitutions of Clarendon, which made ecclesiastics amenable to the temporal power. To the Constitutions Becket dissented, but afterwards, being strongly pressed by the Pope assented; and it was at Woodstock that he gave in his submission to the King. But again his purpose changed. He repented of his repentance, withdrew his assent to the Constitutions, and humbled himself by severe bodily penance for his weakness in having given way to the King.

'When his fellow-Bishops are either unwilling to recall the concessions, or through fear of the King which lay upon them dare not, the Bishop goes to the King's residence, the Chace of Woodstock, surrounded with a wall of stone, where he heard that the King was; but he was repulsed from the door and returned to Canterbury.'†

That was the last visit of the great Archbishop to Oxfordshire. Then followed six years of bitter conflict. Becket was in exile oversea goading the King to fury with the notorious reservation 'saving the honour of my order' with which submission was nullified; and Henry retaliated by any persecution at home which he thought could break his enemy's power. The end came when Becket returned to England after an unreal reconciliation, and

* Dean Hook, 'Lives of Archbishops of Canterbury.'

† Stephanides, 'Vita B. Thom. Cant.,' quoted by Marshall in his 'History of Woodstock,' 1873, p. 61.

was brained by Fitzurse and his companions in the dusk of a winter's evening in his cathedral church of Canterbury.

The reaction in popular opinion was sudden and complete. St. Thomas of Canterbury became at once the most popular of English saints, and in Oxfordshire are three churches dedicated to his honour—Elsfield, Goring, St. Thomas's at Oxford; also chapels in St. Mary's Church, Oxford (this chapel was removed in rebuilding, *circa* 1490) and in the Church of St. John the Baptist, Burford.

Woodstock is of course intimately associated with the episode of Fair Rosamund. It is very difficult to say how much of the popular story is true, and it would be perhaps as injudicious to deny it *in toto*, as to believe all the romantic additions which have gradually clustered round it. It seems probable that the King formed very early in life an illicit connection with one Rosamund Clifford. She was daughter to Walter Lord Clifford, of Clifford Castle, in Herefordshire, and a girl of the greatest beauty. Some say that Rosamund was dismissed openly on the marriage of Henry with Eleanor, and that the Queen was aware of the liaison which had previously existed; but it is more likely that Henry concealed the matter from his wife, and that it was only revealed to her by some accident after her marriage.

A maze* (which plays so large a part in the story) was from a very early period a not unusual addition to the pleasure-grounds of a large house; and the accident of the apartments reserved for Rosamund's use at Woodstock being near such a 'round-about' probably gave rise to the story that her 'bower' was concealed by it. Such a maze would certainly form a very inadequate protection against jealous adversaries. It is worth noticing, too, that according to some chroniclers Woodstock was not the only 'bower' which the King made for his favourite.

> 'Boures had this Rosamunde aboute in Engelond
> Which this Kyng for her sake made, iche understonde,'

says Robert of Gloucester.† So that it seems reasonable to suppose that Rosamund moved about from one royal house to another as occasion offered, and that the Queen discovered her when she happened to be staying at Woodstock. So early as a

* Mazes were common adjuncts to medieval houses of importance. They were rarely of stone or brick, more often of 'topiary' or clipt-hedge work, and most frequently merely traced as a path either with a box border or by cutting out the turf on a down or meadow. They were used especially by monastic houses as exercise-grounds, and sometimes for working out physical penances. They were known as Labyrinths, Dædals, or Troy-towns, hence the occurrence of such names as Troy Farm, Troy, or Troy Town. There is a maze cut in the turf on the hill above Somerton, at a place called Troy Farm.

† For this and subsequent quotations, see Mr. Marshall's valuable 'History of Woodstock,' from which this account is mostly taken.

century after these events, in 1729 (7 Edward I.), men deposed to the fact of Henry having often 'resided in his manor of Wodestok for the love of a certain woman named Rosamund'; and a part of the manor-house buildings is mentioned officially as 'Rosamund's Chamber' in accounts of Henry III.'s time.

Assuming that Rosamund's connection with the King was not openly terminated on his marriage, and that the story is true, which states that she was discovered by the Queen, that event is supposed to have taken place in the year 1157. The dagger and the cup may safely be set aside, but it is probable that the Queen's natural resentment forced Rosamund into retirement, and that she fled for refuge to the newly founded nunnery of Godstow. It is uncertain whether she took the veil, but she seems to have remained an inmate of the convent for twenty years until her death in 1177. She was buried in the conventual church, and on her tomb was engraved the well-known punning distich:

HIC JACET IN TVMBA ROSA MVNDI NON ROSA MVNDA
NON REDOLET SED OLET QVAE REDOLERE SOLET.

There is some reason to think that this couplet was a stock property of medieval tomb-makers for use with any Rosamund deceased, in which case the *non munda* has no reference to poor Rosamund Clifford's frailties, but would merely express the uncleanness of decay, an idea which is further elaborated in the somewhat coarse jesting of the last line. Even after she was dead and buried she was not allowed to rest in peace, for Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, visited Godstow Nunnery in 1191, and, seeing her tomb treated with more consideration than he esteemed meet, ordered the body to be exhumed and buried outside the church. After the lapse of a convenient time, however, the remains were restored to their old place in the church, and stayed there till the Dissolution. Leland says: 'Rosamunde's tumbe at Godestow Nunnery was taken up a late; it is a stone with the inscription TVMBA ROSAMVNDAE. Her bones were closid in lede, and within that closid in lether; when it was openid there was a very swete smell came owt of it.'

From 1186 to 1200 Hugh, a Carthusian, born at Avalon, near Grenoble (canonized after his death, and better known as St. Hugh), was Bishop of Lincoln, and consequently Diocesan of Oxfordshire. He was among the greatest in the list of those great Bishops who held the See of Lincoln almost successively. Like Remigius and Alexander, he was a glorious builder, and to him must be attributed the design of Lincoln Cathedral as it now stands, and the first and perhaps the fairest pure Pointed work in England, the well-known Angel Choir.

In 1166 a remarkable Council of ecclesiastical inquiry was held at Oxford. Thirty Germans, Vaudois, or Waldenses, were arraigned for holding doctrines contrary to those in vogue at the time, and in their teaching may probably be traced the first mutterings of Lollardism. They were examined, and gave sound answers on certain points; but as they denied the efficacy of the Sacraments, saw Antichrist in the Pope, and held the clergy to be the very whore of Babylon, they were, of course, condemned. Their punishment was exemplary. They were branded on the forehead, stript naked to the waist, and whipped out of the town. It was in the depth of winter, and as a proclamation was issued forbidding anyone to give them shelter or food, most of them perished by the wayside of hunger and cold.

In 1222 another ecclesiastical Council at Oxford had brought before it some wretched religio-maniacs. Two men pretended to have on hands and feet and side the *stigmata* of Christ; two women called themselves the Blessed Virgin. In gruesome irony the men were crucified (on the village green of Adderbury); the women were walled up and left to starve.

In contrast with these ugly stories was the tolerance at this time extended to the Jews. That strange people had already obtained a firm footing in many of the big towns. William the Conqueror first admitted them to England; and their command of money soon rendered them indispensable, not only to the Crown, but also to the traders of the country. Their abilities were by no means confined to money-making, and to them must be attributed the chief credit of whatever advance in medicine and science was made at this period. At Oxford there was allotted to them a special district called the Great and Little Jewries, occupying part of the site of Christ Church and the present town-hall. Here they had a synagogue for the performance of their religious rites, and a plot of ground was assigned them as a cemetery outside the East Gate. Jewries, like forests, were entirely under the protection of the King, and not of the common law. As a rule, the King's power was strong enough to shield them from the enmity aroused by their usury and religion. But occasionally their ill-concealed contempt for Catholic doctrine and ceremonial provoked reprisals, and Jew-baiting and outrages on the Jewry were at times a fashionable amusement, though nothing very serious appears to have come of it. In 1290 Edward I. expelled them from the kingdom, and in the awful sufferings they then endured was probably concentrated the vengeance which had been brewing for two centuries against them and their evil ways.

CHAPTER VII.

RICHARD I., JOHN, HENRY III., THE FRIARS.

ON Henry II.'s death in 1189 ensued another of those intervals of retrogression and confusion which were at this time so curiously sandwiched between periods of progress and strong government. As the anarchy of Stephen had followed the consolidation of Henry I., so the misgovernment and oppression of Richard and John followed the organization of Henry II.

Richard I. was born, in 1157, at the Palace of Beaumont, outside the north wall of Oxford.* But although he was thus an Oxfordshire man by birth, he had been educated entirely on the Continent; so that when he came to the throne, at the age of thirty-two, he knew very little of the English part of his dominions. 'The Crusades brought with them a passion for adventure, and some licentiousness, as well as religious enthusiasm. This spirit was now abroad in England, and the King, with his wild love of adventure at any price, was its fitting representative. For the sake of adventure, honesty, good government, and national honour were sacrificed. Thus, there was scarcely an office which was not openly put up for sale. Cities bought their charters, Judges their seats on the bench, Bishops their sees.'

Oxford obtained one of these venal charters. Henry II. had already in 1161 granted a very important charter to the town, in the preamble of which he professes only to confirm the liberties which the place had enjoyed under his grandfather, the first Henry. By this charter Oxford was given the same laws, customs, and liberties as were enjoyed by London. The Oxford Guild

* 'In the said mansion or Pallace, in a chamber standing sometime where these Brethren [the Carmelites, to whom Beaumont was given as a monastery by Edward II.] afterwards built their Campanile, was Richard, commonly called for his high spirit and audacity *Cor de Lyon*, borne. Which place the said brethren with no little pride would show to strangers at their coming to this place.'—A. Wood.

Merchant was established with full rights, the town was allowed to levy all kinds of taxes and dues reasonable and unreasonable, and the matter was clenched with the barbarous rigmarole of sac and soc, tol, team, and infangtheof. By this new charter Richard gave the city a Mayor and two Aldermen, and appointed the Mayor to be sub-butler under the Lord Mayor of London at the coronation feast, a privilege that was claimed and exercised at the coronation of Charles II.

It was but a flying visit that Richard paid to England, and in June of 1190 he started on the third Crusade.

There had been many changes in Oxfordshire families in the 100 years that followed the compilation of Domesday, and some of the greatest Conquest names are found missing by the end of the twelfth century. Roger D'Ivry, son of Robert D'Oily's sworn brother and confederate in war, had taken arms with other Barons against William Rufus, and so losing his estates died in exile. His property was restored to his son Geoffrey, but the direct line of D'Ivry became extinct early in the twelfth century, and their great possessions passed to the St. Walerys. The original St. Walery was one of the Conqueror's followers, and at the end of the twelfth century his descendant held Ambrosden and Mixbury Castle and much other property, which was called after the family the barony of St. Walery.

Milo Crispin, the Lord of Wallingford, Bicester, and other possessions, died about 1108, and his lands passed into the hands of the Bassets, some of the new administrative nobles of Henry I. Ralph Basset, one of Henry's justices, was the founder of the family, and from a lowly origin they rose to power and wealth. Gilbert Basset the younger built and endowed the new Priory of St. Edburg at Bicester in 1182, and at the close of the century had his residence at that place, and owned a great property in the neighbourhood.

The D'Oily family still survived, and had now their principal seat at Hooknorton; but they had lost much of their property, and no longer held that commanding position in the county which the old Constables of Oxford had occupied at the Conquest.

Other leading families were Fitz-Nigell of Boarstall, Fitz-Count of Wallingford, D'Amory Lord of Bucknell, and Arsic of Cogges. When Odo Bishop of Bayeux's enormous English possessions of 500 or 600 manors were confiscated, the Conqueror made over 171 knights' fees to the Constable of Dover Castle for distribution among certain knights, who were thus to be more specially attached to the defence of Dover. One of these knights was William of Arsic, who got 18½ knights' fees, but had to provide 18 soldiers.

Of his 18½ fees 6¼ were in Oxfordshire, including Finmere, Fringford, Fritwell, Somerton, etc., and when the Arsic property passed to the De Greys, *circa* 1250, it was still saddled with a charge for the support of Dover Castle. Manasses Arsic founded the alien Priory of Cogges in 1110 as a cell to Fécamp, Gilbert Basset founded Bicester Priory in 1182, and Bernard de St. Walery founded Studley Priory in 1184.

But the most important man in Oxfordshire at Richard's accession was probably Richard de Camville, Lord of Middleton Castle. He was the son of that De Camville who had been so stanch an adherent of Stephen all through his wars with the Empress. From first to last the Crusading spirit found in Oxfordshire something particularly responsive to its prompting, and the movement was always popular in the district.* Among the more important of those who followed Richard in the first Crusade were Bernard de St. Walery and Richard de Camville. The expedition was delayed by various causes, and it was not till June, 1190, that the King was able to leave Marseilles. He made Richard de Camville one of his Admirals, and later on a joint administrator of Cyprus after Isaac, the Emperor, had been conquered. It was in Cyprus, according to Roger of Howden, that De Camville fell sick. Feeling his illness increase, he gave up his governorship without waiting for the King's leave, and pushed on to Acre, in the siege of which the Crusaders were then occupied. Neither Bernard de St. Walery nor Richard de Camville lived to see their homes again, but left their bones before the walls of Acre, like so many other noble English soldiers. They were succeeded in their properties by their respective sons, Thomas de St. Walery and Gerard de Camville.

In spite of successful skirmishes and brilliant feats of arms, the third Crusade was a failure. Richard, learning that trouble was brewing at home, effected a compromise with Saladin, and set out on his return journey. On his way overland he was made prisoner by Leopold, Archduke of Austria, and sold by him to Henry VI., Emperor of Germany.

The news of his imprisonment deeply stirred the feeling of England, and a Council was held at Oxford in 1193 to consider the means of raising the ransom which the Emperor demanded. The sum asked, 100,000 marks, was very heavy, but it was raised

* 'The Lion-hearted King,' says Brewer, 'retained to the last a predilection for his native county, and the number of cross-legged effigies connected with the Oxfordshire families prove the ardour with which they entered into his views.' Whatever may be thought of the tradition which makes all cross-legged knights Crusaders, the abundance of such effigies in the district is worth notice.

after some difficulty. Oxford was not unmindful of royal favours in the past, and contributed, it is said, a handsome sum, but the bulk of it came, no doubt, from the Church.

Richard landed at Sandwich on March 13, 1191. His presence was sorely needed, for affairs had gone from bad to worse. John had been doing what he could to upset his brother's power, and was ably seconded in these endeavours by Philip of France. Many of the great nobles, too, had caballed against their master, and Oxfordshire was a focus of disaffection. John had secured Wallingford Castle in the south of the county, and in the north Gerard de Camville (who succeeded his father, the Crusader) had forsaken the traditional loyalty of his house, and held Middleton Castle for Richard's enemy. He was, in fact, one of the most important of John's adherents, and, holding as he did the shrievalty of Lincoln, had already come into collision there with the Chancellor, Walter of Rouen, who besieged Lincoln Castle in the King's name. The Bassets had also joined the disaffected party.

But on Richard's return the plots and schemes of his opponents fell to the ground like a pack of cards, and the rebel castles at once gave in their allegiance. At a Parliament which the King held at Nottingham, on March 30, 1194, Gerard de Camville was disseised of his lands both in Lincoln and Oxfordshire, and only regained his castle of Middleton by a payment of 2,000 marks. The Bassets were declared to have forfeited their property, and compounded for its restoration with a fine.

In 1194, the year of Richard's return, the first publicly authorized tournaments were held in England. The charter of constitution orders that tournaments should be arranged in five different places, and one of these was in Oxfordshire. The full list was 'Between Salisbury and Wilton, between Warwick and Kenelingworth, between Stamford and Warineford, between Brackele and Mixbury, between Blie and Tikehill.' The spot selected between Brackley and Mixbury is now a broad patch of greensward by the side of the road from Mixbury to Oxford, where the way goes off to Bicester on the one hand and Banbury on the other. It is known to-day as Bears Green, a corruption from Bayards (or Horses) Green, and the memory of the jousts which it once witnessed is thus curiously preserved. Such a scene as that described in 'Ivanhoe' can easily be imagined as taking place on this breezy Oxfordshire common; and the great Norman Castle of Beaumont by Mixbury must have seen many a bravely-accoutred party of knights setting out on the summer mornings for the lists of Bayards Green. These gentle passages of arms were often productive of grave breaches of the public peace, besides occa-

sioning the death of a certain number of distinguished jousters, and they had fallen under the ban of the Church and been specially anathematized. But in spite of such condemnation the King found reason to continue tournaments, and there is no doubt that the custom was a very popular one. The ostensible object of such shows was 'to make English subjects more expert in arms, and that they might not be insulted over by the French, who in these feats did much excell them'; but a more cogent motive was perhaps to be found in the revenues which accrued from tournaments to the King's private purse. What would now be called the 'entrance fees' were very heavy. An Earl paid 20 marks of silver for a tilting license, a Baron 10 marks, a landed knight 4 marks, and a landless 2 marks. So the custom went on in the face of the Church's opposition, and was not put an end to till Edward III.'s reign. Bayards Green saw a second tournament in Henry III.'s time, 1249.

In 1190 a great fire raged in Oxford. Fires were unpleasantly frequent phenomena of the Middle Ages. The houses were built of wood, and stood thickly huddled together, while there was no provision for extinguishing a conflagration. So if fire broke out in a dry season or with a high wind, there was very little likelihood of its being stopped till it had actually burnt itself out. This fire of 1190 seems to have been more than usually disastrous, and destroyed the larger part of the city. It was not, however, an unmixed evil, for after it the houses were rebuilt in a more solid fashion, and stone was more freely used, especially for partition walls.

John, like his brother, was born in Oxfordshire, having first seen the light at Woodstock Palace in 1166, but, unlike Richard, he constantly visited the county. Sometimes it was to Beaumont he came, when a Parliament was held in the city; sometimes he went to Woodstock to enjoy the pleasures of the chase. It is at this time also that we hear for the first time of the residence of Langley. This was a royal hunting-lodge on the high land about three miles north-east of Burford, which was surrounded by Wychwood Forest until the disafforestation of 1863. John had it built apparently as a sort of annexe to Woodstock, and moved thither from time to time when he wished to hunt in Wychwood. The Court is recorded to have been at Langley for the first time in 1204, and the buildings were subsequently enlarged, until it became eventually a place of considerable accommodation. It was used by Royalty so late as 1614, and there is a curious entry in the parish register of Shipton-under-Wychwood in that year, showing that 'a French boy from Langley, the Court being there,'

was buried in Shipton churchyard. It is said that he was drowned in the Evenlode.

There are still remains of the lodge to be seen at Langley, though the place is lonely and inaccessible, lying as it does in the midst of the dreary and bleak tillage-fields on the Shipton Downs. What survives of the house has been converted into a farmstead, but existing portions point to the mansion having been of the sixteenth century, with some earlier windows.

All through John's reign, and that of his successor, Henry III., Oxford maintained its reputation as a convenient place of public meeting, and a long list of Oxford Parliaments is recorded. It is not necessary to enumerate the subjects that were discussed, because they had for the most part no local significance.

The military importance of Oxford made itself felt during John's contests with the Barons, as it did at so many other critical epochs both before and after; and the city, dominated by the Norman castle, was a valuable stronghold of the King. After John's death it became, in 1217, the headquarters of those Barons who supported young Henry III., while Lewis the Dauphin and his followers took up their position at Cambridge. Message after message passed between the two places in fruitless attempt to compromise, until Lewis, finding the fortune of war and the feeling of the country alike against him, set sail from Dover at Michaelmas, 1218.

Gilbert Basset, Lord of Bicester, died in 1209, and was buried in his priory church of St. Edburg. By his death the great house of De Camville of Middleton gained a further accession of property. Gerard de Camville then paid the King 1,000 marks, and was made guardian of Eustatia, Gilbert Basset's widow, and shortly afterwards married her to Richard de Camville, his son. Thus, though Thomas Basset, Gilbert's brother, inherited some of the Basset property, Bicester itself passed to Richard de Camville, who on his father's death became not only Lord of Middleton, but also of Bicester, and patron of the priory there; but he had to give the King 2,000 marks and ten palfries for livery of his wife's inheritance. John had also granted the De Camvilles the privilege of holding a weekly market at Middleton, a right which was much valued and jealously guarded, as bringing considerable dues to the exchequer of the Lord of the Manor.

The long and dreary reign of Henry III. saw many important meetings gathered at Oxford. It was at Oxford in 1227 that Henry III. called a Parliament, and declared that, being now of full age, he would have no more of guardians, but take the reins of government into his own hands. At Oxford met that memor-

able Parliament of 1258, which put the Crown into commission and promulgated the famous Provisions of Oxford, 'destined afterwards to prove almost as sure a rallying-point for popular liberties, and as disastrous a stumbling-block to the King, as was Magna Charta itself.' From Oxford in 1263 the patriot, Simon de Montfort, and his assembled Barons sent to the King the final summons to observe the Provisions of 1258 before they appealed to arms. But of all this an account must be sought elsewhere.

In 1237 Otho, the Cardinal Legate, visited Oxford, and was lodged at Oseney Abbey. Thither the students flocked to see him; but as they pressed in an unseemly throng about the abbey gates, the porter greeted them with scurvy language, and tried to drive them back by force. A scuffle ensued, in which the Legate's brother—who acted as his chief cook to ensure him against poison—was shot by a student, and the Legate himself fled for his life to Abingdon. An interdict followed, and the King, sending an armed force, had thirty scholars imprisoned. Then came the usual humiliating penances: Masters of Arts walked in a barefoot procession through Cheapside to St. Paul's, and so at last the Legate was appeased.

On Ascension Day, 1268, occurred a riot between Jews and Christians in Oxford. 'A long procession of clergy was wending its way towards the Cemetery of St. Frideswide to hear the public sermon which the Chancellor of the University was wont to preach on that day, when a number of Jews made a sudden attack on the cross-bearer, and, having wrenched the cross out of his hands, trampled it under foot ignominiously.' The King, who was at Woodstock, at once took steps to have the Jews properly punished. They were condemned to set up a cross 'made of marble, fair and lofty, well and suitably carved and polished, with a crucifix on one side, and a figure of the Blessed Virgin with her Son on the other conveniently arranged and gilded,' in the place where the attack was made, and to furnish a large silver-gilt processional cross for the use of the University.

The reign of Henry III. saw the introduction into the ecclesiastical system of a new element of vigorous reform. As the Cistercians had come in the twelfth century to reform the Benedictines, so the Friars came in the thirteenth to reform the Cistercians. The great monastic Orders had sought spiritual perfection in isolation; in the effort to work out their own salvation they had paid but little attention to that of their fellow-men at large. In the retirement of their splendid houses planted by the waterside in the fairest sites in England, they entertained

noble travellers, and were known as agriculturists and wool-growers, as chroniclers and librarians; but they had little to do with the lower people, and nothing in common with the life of the towns. In contrast to all this came the Friars. Wearing coarse gowns of serge tied round with rope, they practised—at any rate, at first—the vows of rigid poverty, they mingled cheek by jowl with the meanest of the mean, and for their settlements chose the most squalid of the slums. They would not have been human, of course, if such noble living had been for very long observed, and in time their profession of poverty became a farce, and they grew to need reform more than all others. But at the first they carried all before them with their energy and self-sacrifice. They seem to have had much in common with the revivalists of our own day, something, perhaps, in common (to use a derogatory comparison) with the Salvation Army. 'We can hardly wonder,' says Mr. Green, 'at the outburst of enthusiasm which welcomed the itinerant preacher, whose fervid appeal, coarse wit, and familiar story brought religion into the fair and market-place. The mendicant brother begged his way from town to town, chatting with farmer or housewife at the cottage door, and setting up his portable pulpit in market-place or village green. His open-air sermons, ranging from impassioned devotion to coarse story and homely mother-wit, became the journals as well as the homilies of the day; political and social questions found place in them side by side with spiritual matters; and the rudest countryman learned his tale of a King's oppression or a patriot's hopes as he listened to the rambling, passionate, humorous discourse of the begging friar.'

Of these Friars there were many Orders, but the three most important were the Black Friars of St. Dominic, the Grey Friars of St. Francis, and the White Friars, called Carmelites.

The Black Friars reached England in 1221, or perhaps a year or two later, and seem to have made first to London, and thence almost immediately to Oxford. There they established themselves at first in the Jewry, but afterwards, finding a great benefactress in Isabel, wife of Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, moved to more commodious quarters in the 'south suburbs.' Their house and church were built in the low-lying meadows by the Thames on the west of Grandpont or Grampound Bridge. 'Since the plucking downe of the church,' says Anthony Wood, writing of the Black Friars at Oxford, 'have been dug up coffins wherein have been persons with little chalices in their hands, rings on their fingers & medalls about their necks, with some remnants of parchment-writing (having seales attached) sometimes found lying

by them. The hearts of severall have been found closed in lead about the bigness of a man's head. Of which one being taken up by a gardiner with an inscription, about the year 1644, was as a rarity shewed to Charles I. then at Oxford which being opened in his sight the heart looked verie fresh.'

On the Black Friars followed the Grey Friars of St. Francis, and the story of their journey to Oxford is graphically told by a later writer of their own Order* quoted by Wood.

As they journeyed from London to Oxford, they wandered out of their way 'like innocent and harmless wretches,' and, being about six miles from Oxford, found themselves 'in a most vast and solitary wood' near Baldon, with the floods out and night falling. Stumbling along in the darkness, they came upon a lonely grange belonging to the Benedictine monks of Abingdon, and humbly knocked at the door, desiring for God's love to be given entertainment for the night. The monks, judging from their dirty faces, ragged clothes, and uncouth speech, took them for jesters, and brought them in 'that they might quaff and show sport to them.' But the Friars, 'looking gravely upon them,' said that 'they were not such kind of people, but the servants of God, and professors of an apostolic life.' They were thereupon 'vilely spurned and thrust out of the gate' by the disappointed monks.

A young novice, however, had compassion on them, and, going out secretly, called them back, hid them in a hayloft, and supplied them with meat and drink. In the night the novice had a terrible dream. He saw Christ sitting on the judgment throne, and the Prior and monks of the little grange in Baldon Wood arraigned before Him. Then 'a dispised poore man in the habit of a Minor Fryer' accused the monks before Christ, saying that they had refused to holy men the hospitality that they would have granted to jesters, and so endangered their life. Christ asked the Prior in an awful voice of what Order he was, and received for answer, 'Of St. Benedict's.' But St. Benedict, who himself stood by, denied that the Prior was any follower of his, since he had refused hospitality to guests. Then Christ commanded that the Prior, with the Sacrist and the Cellarer, should all be hanged on 'the great elm-tree before the cloister.' Afterwards Christ turned to the young novice himself, and asked of what Order he was, and the novice, benefiting by past experience, said he was of the same Order as these holy Friars. Christ turned to the accuser, who was in the garb of a Minor Friar, but who was really St. Francis himself, and said: 'Francis, is it true that he saith, that he is of your Order?' St. Francis answered: 'He is mine, O Lord, he is

* Bartholomæus de Pisis.

mine,' and embraced the novice so straitly that he woke. The novice ran in his fright, 'with his garments loose about him,' to tell the story to the Prior, whom he found suffering from a terrible nightmare, and both went to seek the holy Friars in the hayloft; but they found the place empty, for the Friars, fearing discovery, had taken their departure at daybreak. The novice afterwards went to Oxford, and was received as a Grey Friar into the Order of St. Francis.

The Grey Friars built their house at Oxford at the back of St. Ebbe's, on a site which was bounded on the south by the Trill stream, and lay between the south or water gate and a little postern nearer the castle, through which a road led across Trill stream, by Preachers' Bridge, to the Black Friars. Through the kindness of benefactors their property grew in extent, and their buildings were gradually enlarged, till their church was at the Dissolution considered inferior only to Osney and St. Frideswide's. The friary must have been a pleasant place enough, and Wood bewails the Dissolution, when the 'buildings, courts, a pleasant grove of 5 acres, a garden called Boteham, and the orchard or garden called Paradise,'* had to be given up, and the 'poore Fryers were turned out and put to their shifts.' 'Mors etiam saxis nominibusque venit,' the moralizer sums up, and a squalid place, called Paradise Square, is all that is left to-day to travesty with its ugliness the memory of the grove and 'privat meanders' of the Franciscans' pleasance.

With the early fortunes of the Grey Friars at Oxford is associated a group of splendid names. Roger Bacon himself joined the Order, and though the breadth of his encyclopædic knowledge, and the omnivorous pursuit of science, natural and occult, which gained him the reputation of a magician,† might seem to have but little in common with a life of religious sacrifice, it is still as Friar Bacon that he is commonly known, and rightly, for he was a true Franciscan. He is said to have used the church tower of Sunningwell, a little village near Radley, in summer for an observatory; and the more famous Friar Bacon's study remained at Oxford so late as 1779. The 'study' was an hexagonal tower, carried on an archway that spanned Grandpont Bridge. In it was said to have been placed a magic head of

* A 'paradise' was a generic term for a conventual garden.

† 'Few writers of the thirteenth century have deserved a better and endured a worse fate than Friar Bacon. Imprisoned in his lifetime for many years by the superiors of his Order, *propter quasdam novitates*, he never found an opportunity of completing his great designs for the reform of education, the promotion of experimental science, and the regeneration of the Church and the world thereby.'

bronze, which Bacon made to utter oracles and disclose the means whereby England should be secured from invasion. A brother Friar, Bungay by name, while waiting for these utterances, fell asleep, and the slighted head burst in pieces with the ejaculation, 'Time is past.' Of Bacon's learning there was no end, and tradition said that the tower would fall if ever man more learned than the Friar should pass thereunder. 'So Bacon's mansion trembled o'er their heads,' and it was possibly to avoid so imminent a catastrophe that it was pulled down in 1779.

Agnell of Pisa, the first Franciscan Prior, secured for his Order the sympathies and support of Robert Grostête, the great Bishop of Lincoln. Robert was consecrated to the See of Lincoln by St. Edmund (Rich, 'Archbishops of Canterbury') at Reading on June 17, 1235. He is known as a reformer, ecclesiastical and temporal, as the constant antagonist of Henry's un-English and oppressive policy, and as the uncompromising opponent of Innocent III. But apart from those events which make his life so interesting from a general point of view, are some which connect him more closely with the history of Oxfordshire. For this part of his vast diocese he seems to have exercised a constant and fatherly supervision, and we find his name occurring again and again, whether as condemning appropriations and consolidating vicarage and rectory in a county parish, or as arbitrating in Oxford uproars and composing the wild passions of a mob of students, or as a church-builder, or as a lecturer in the rising schools. There are buildings even now to be seen at no great distance from Oxford which attest his liberality and taste.

Thame, on the county's eastern border, and Aylesbury beyond it, were prebendals of Lincoln Cathedral, and there is little doubt that the fine churches at both places were built by Grostête about 1241. They differ in plan and detail from others in the neighhood, and were probably the work of masons brought by him from Lincoln. There is a pretty tradition that, when the great Bishop lay dying in his castle at Lincoln, he heard the angels singing round his bed, and as his spirit passed, the tenor bells in the towns of Thame and Aylesbury tolled without mortal ringers. Later ages have much changed Grostête's church of Thame, but there is standing not very far from it, in the grounds of the Prebendal House, an Early English chapel, which remains as it left his hand so far as the fabric is concerned. Though the building is small, the detail is excellent, and 'it might be taken for a part of Lincoln Minster'; but a pitiably unappreciative tenant has put it unhappily to sordid purposes.

Prior Agnell persuaded Grostête to 'lecture' in the new school

which the Grey Friars had built; and with such names as Adam de Marisco, Duns Scotus, and William Occam, the Franciscans did much to build up a teaching reputation on the Continent, not only for their own Order, but also for Oxford. The Grey Friars inherited both Grostête's and Bacon's books, but the early promise of the Order faded away as wealth increased, and evil days fell at last upon its famous library.

Leland, who visited the house just before the Dissolution, was moved to bitter indignation at what he saw. 'I asked to see the library,' he says, 'at which these asses were somewhat astonished, and brayed out that no one except the warden and the holy bachelors of the house were allowed to approach so sacred a retreat. I pressed them, however, and at length, armed with a royal warrant, pretty well forced them to open the holy place. So at last one of the elder asses, braying terribly, opened the doors, though much against his will. Almighty Jove! what did I find? Dirt, spider-webs, book-worms, moths, dust, and decay!' Grostête's valuable books had been illicitly disposed of; those the worthy antiquary found were 'such as I would not give twopence for.' Bacon's manuscripts had fared still worse, for 'these ignorant sciolists, condemning as necromancy what they could not understand, had nailed them through with long nails on to the desks,' and there they remained to feed the book-worm and the moth.

The lax living and carelessness of these later Grey Friars was not left, indeed, without rebuke, for we read that 'In the church, one evening after compline, the brothers were laughing in a ribald fashion, when the wooden rood that stood above the screen turned round to face them with so dreadful a cry, as struck the deepest terror into them, and more than one within a short space departed out of this life.'

After the Grey Friars came the White Friars, and reached Oxford about the middle of the thirteenth century. They were called Carmelites, from their celebrated monastery on Mount Carmel, which had been visited by the Crusaders, and from whence Richard de Grey and John Vesey brought some of the brothers back with them to England. Their first house at Oxford was in Stockwell Street, in the parish of St. Thomas, where Worcester College now stands; but fortune smiled upon them, and they moved ere long to statelier lodgings.

A Carmelite named Baston, who was a ready hand at turning verses, was attached as a sort of Laureate to the suite of Edward I. He sang his master's exploits, and was with Edward II. in the disaster of Bannockburn. In the hour of panic the flying King

commended himself with a vow to the Mother of God; and, on the suggestion of the quick-witted Carmelite, promised if he left the field alive, to provide the poor White Friars of Oxford with a better house. Edward afterwards redeemed this vow by making over to the Order his own royal palace of Beaumont, and into it the White Friars moved. They took the banqueting-hall ('where divers Kings have kept with great solemnity the nativity of Christ and the Passover') for a refectory, and the royal chapel for the friary church. But though Beaumont was thus made over to the Friars, the Kings generally found a lodging there when they came to Oxford, and some of them, and especially Henry VI., seem to have still used the place for a residence.

The Carmelites were proud of pointing out to strangers the room in which Richard Cœur de Lion was born, and the church had 'a fair steeple and an indifferent ring of bells." But at the Dissolution it all came down, except the refectory, which by a sordid conversion became a poor-house, and was at length demolished by St. John's College in 1596. It was among the Carmelites that Reginald Cardinal Pole had his 'first breeding.'

The Austin Friars or Eremite Friars of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, came to Oxford about 1268. Their dress was very like the Dominicans', but a feature of it was a broad leathern belt worn over all, 'which they count a very holy thing, for they call it St. Augustine's girdle, and many lay folk doe wear it for pure devotion sake, because (as they say) it hath some singular great vertue in it.' Sir John Handlow of Boarstall was their great benefactor. He gave them the site at present occupied by Wadham College, and there built a fine church, getting the stone from the quarries at Headington and the timber from Shotover Wood, of which he appears to have been keeper.

The grammar school of the Augustinian friary won a very special reputation for the critical discussions and sophistic disputations which were there carried on. These disputations, at first of an informal nature, attracted crowds of students, and became in time a recognised part of the University curriculum, so that before a degree could be taken a certain number of *Disputationes ad Augustinenses* must have been attended. There are instances of the Austin disputations being transferred from the friary to St. Mary's Church, when plague or other infectious sickness was rife among the brethren; and after the Dissolution they were permanently moved thither until the venue was changed to the (then) 'New Schooles.' The custom survived until the present century, and disputations in Austins were held in the schools

on Wednesday and Saturday every term from one to three o'clock, the master of the school moderating.

Besides these greater Orders of Friars, it may be well to mention three unimportant ones who had houses in Oxford. These were the Trinitarians, the Penitentiarians, and the Crutched Friars. They all owed their existence in Oxford to that 'lover of religionists,' Henry III., 'a royal and alwaies-running fountaine of bounty and charity.'

The Trinitarians (whose white robe with a blue and red cross on it is still a familiar sight on the Continent) had a house outside the East Gate, and devoted themselves to a special reverence of the Trinity, and to the redemption of Christians captured by infidels. A visitation of the plague, however, carried off almost all the Friars in 1351, and though the society dwindled on as a Hall of poor scholars until the Dissolution, it never recovered any real vitality. Their chapel was used as a place of sanctuary, and in it the Mayor of Oxford used to hear Mass on his return from London after taking his election oath at the Exchequer; and was thence conducted by the citizens to his own house.

The Penitentiarians (*Fratres de penitentia Jesu*) had a house outside the West Gate, and undertook to do penance not only for themselves, but also for benefactors. They were, however, suppressed *circa* 1307, and their land taken by the Franciscans.

The Crutched or Crossed Friars were so called from their originally carrying a wooden cross in their hand, and afterwards a red cross sewn upon their breast. They had a house near Grandpont, and later on near St. Peter-in-the-East; but very little is known about them, and they never occupied any important position in the city.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EARLY UNIVERSITY.

THE history of the Friars has been given at some length, because their advent had a vitalizing effect upon the embryo University. And as to the origin of the University, it seems a convenient time to say a few words, premising that any detailed inquiry would be entirely foreign to the scope of a little book like this.*

Setting aside the theory of Alfred's foundation as untenable, it may be remarked that the entire silence of Domesday probably points to there being no organized teaching establishment at Oxford at the date of that compilation. But by the time of Henry I. the Oxford schools, if not yet very famous, were certainly recognised. As to the reasons which led the first teachers and scholars to Oxford, we can only conjecture. The town had been for centuries of importance. It was a valuable military site; it had been chosen again and again as a convenient spot for national meetings; it had rejoiced continually in royal favour; and it possessed important if not first-rate monasteries. There would be a demand for teaching in such a place, and the demand was probably first supplied by the cloister schools of the Augustines at St. Frideswide's and Osney.

Henry I.'s sobriquet of Beauclerk points to his having been a man of some learning, and though the tradition of his being 'educated at Oxford' lacks confirmation, he is recorded to have 'delighted in the conversation of clerks,' and possibly exercised from his Palace of Beaumont a fostering care over the young University. But the growth of the schools was due to that instinct which prompts two of a trade to agree to live in one place, in

* Among the many excellent works on this subject may be specially mentioned those of Maxwell Lyte, and Brodrick, and Rashdall's 'Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages.'

spite of any proverb to the contrary. It was to be expected that students and teachers should go where there were already other students and teachers to welcome them, and to stand by for mutual protection and assistance. The advantage or necessity of such co-operation is apparent when it is considered that the extreme scarcity of manuscripts made oral instruction the only practical method of imparting knowledge. It is in the system of trade guilds that the origin of the University is to be sought, and, indeed, the word 'university' itself seems to have meant originally little more than a trades union and to have been gradually narrowed down to a trades union of students or of teachers.

The Italian Universities (such as Bologna) and the University of Paris had already obtained a wide repute, and it was from them, and especially from Paris, that Oxford eventually borrowed most of its academic machinery and nomenclature. There was no charter of incorporation, and no definite date at which it can be said that the University was 'founded'; everything was done haphazard, custom crystallized into law, and the complete fabric grew up by a natural process of accretion.

The first teachers were no doubt monks, and taught under the shadow of St. Frideswide's and Osney; but there very soon sprang up a great number of other teachers (probably clerics, but not attached to any monastery) who lectured to any students whom they could persuade to pay them, in whatever rooms they could secure through the town. The students, like their teachers, were for the most part not attached to the monasteries, but nominally under the control of the Bishop of Lincoln. This control was exercised by an officer named the Chancellor, appointed at first by the Bishop as a *Rector Scholarum* to look after the scholars.

There was no entrance examination or matriculation required of a student; so long as he paid his fees and his lodging, he could come or go exactly as he pleased. On the other hand, no qualification was required in the teacher; it was a matter for his own consideration whether he could lecture well enough to attract a sufficient number of students to make a living off their fees.

However rough-and-ready in their methods, the schools at Oxford throve in the first half of the twelfth century, and extended their reputation beyond England. In 1133 they attracted the notice of one Robert Pullus, a Paris teacher (perhaps an Englishman by birth), who came over and lectured on the Bible; and in 1149 a far more renowned man, Vacarius, came from the great legal University of Bologna, and by his lectures introduced into Oxford the study of Roman law, which soon assumed an impor-

tant place in the curriculum of the University. Such visits of foreign teachers are less to be wondered at when the thoroughly cosmopolitan character of the early Universities is taken into account. The circulation of students through England and the Continent from one great school of learning to another is certainly remarkable in view of the difficult conditions of travel which then prevailed. It seems to have been an ordinary practice for young Englishmen of family to complete their education at the University of Paris, where the faculty of arts was itself divided into four 'nations'—French, English, Normans, and Picards.

The latter half of the twelfth century was a period of organization and consolidation for the University.* It was felt to be an evil that no qualification or guarantee of fitness was required from anyone who wished to commence teaching in Oxford, and those who had themselves passed a long period of probation and study felt a natural jealousy of irresponsible chance-comers who poached upon their preserves. To remedy this, the teachers bound themselves together in a professorial guild, with the Bishop's Chancellor as a sort of central authority, and, like other trade guilds, refused to allow anyone to practise the art of teaching until he had served a proper apprenticeship and obtained a formal license to teach. This guild was in effect the 'University,' and its incorporation under the regular jurisdiction of the Chancellor may be dated from the last years of the twelfth century. The first Chancellors were probably nominated by the Bishops of Lincoln, but the office soon became detached from episcopal control; and by 1220 the Chancellor was elected by the University as a totally independent officer, the Bishop of Lincoln being represented by the Archdeacon of Oxford.

The license to teach was the 'degree,' and though in process of time such a title as Master of Arts became a mere honour and distinction, it meant very much more at first, and implied that its possessor had chosen teaching as his vocation, had gone through the proper course of study, and was now judged by the authorities competent to instruct others. In fact, the University or Guild of Teachers, like any other guild, licensed the properly qualified handicraftsman, who had served his apprenticeship, to practise his craft. Those students in the chrysalis stage between scholar and Master, who had reached a certain development in knowledge without being as yet decreed able to teach, were called Bachelors.

* Mr. Rashdall, in 'Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages,' considers that the definite combination of the various Oxford schools into a *studium generale*, or University, must be dated from 1167, when there was a 'migration' of English scholars from Paris to Oxford.

The duration of a University education was very much more protracted in these early days than it is now, and the shortest time in which a degree could be obtained seems to have been eight years; but then University study began at a younger age, and an Oxford training included the years that are now spent at a public school.

The main branches of study were called 'Faculties'; thus, there were Faculties of Arts, Law, Medicine, and Theology; but a degree in the last three subjects could only be taken after the title of Master of Arts had been obtained. Latin was the language used for purposes of instruction, and the Latin grammar was therefore of necessity the first subject of study. As the medieval curriculum developed, the subjects were divided into two main groups. The smaller group, of three branches, was called the *Trivium*, and comprised grammar, rhetoric, and logic; and the ordinary scholar confined himself to these. The more advanced group of four subjects consisted of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy; and all these seven 'liberal arts' were by Churchmen considered only as handmaids to the more serious study of theology.

The young University gathered strength apace. Circumstances favoured its growth and independence. At Paris, as has been pointed out, there was the predominating influence of a royal Court, the constant presence of the high nobility and great minds incidental to a capital, and the residence of the Chancellor of the great cathedral of Notre Dame to keep the University in check. At Oxford there was nothing of the kind. There was no cathedral and no resident Bishop. Even the monasteries, in whose claustral school the University had found its origin, were not of first-class importance, and their shackles were soon thrown off.

With the opening of the thirteenth century began a chronic struggle between the University and the civic authorities, which lasted with periodically acute phases for the best part of two centuries, and resulted in the complete autocracy of the University and the subordination of the town. The scholars found Oxford one of the most flourishing towns of the South of England, important alike from a military and municipal point of view; and they reduced it eventually to a mere appanage of the University, which dared scarcely lay claim to any existence of its own, and which apart from the academic life was lifeless.

The process was carried out in what may be called irreverently a series of aggravated 'town and gown rows.' These conflicts were always bitter, and often accompanied by bloodshed; but

they resulted almost invariably in the humiliation of the citizens, and in the acquisition of new privileges by the University.

In 1208 a scholar, whether by accident or design, killed a girl in a house known afterwards as Maiden Hall, and fled for his life. The enraged citizens sought for the culprit at his lodgings, but not finding him, seized two of his fellow-lodgers, and without trial hanged them outside the walls of Oxford. John himself, though at Woodstock, would not interfere, for he was smarting under an interdict, and in bitter opposition to all Churchmen. The University, resorting to a means of retaliation which was found effectual on more than one similar occasion, threatened to transfer its schools to other places, and a wholesale migration of students to Cambridge, Reading, and Maidstone followed. Nor was this all, for Innocent III., on appeal, applied a very special* interdict to Oxford, which deprived it of all spiritual comforts whatever.

The burghers remained stubborn for four years, but at length, feeling sorely the loss, not only of the Sacraments, but also of their rents and trade, confessed their sins and sought reconciliation. It was to Nicholas of Tusculum, the Papal Legate, then in London, that they appealed, and while he granted them absolution, the penance he exacted was certainly severe. Psalm-singing, scourging, walking stripped and barefoot to the churches of Oxford, were but the minor part of it. The real sting of their humiliation lay in the privileges which were granted, by way of indemnification, to the University. In future it was ordained that any member of the University found in crime should not be subject to the municipal jurisdiction, but should be handed over to the Chancellor for trial in his court. The importance of this privilege at the time it was granted can scarcely be exaggerated; it endures to some extent to this day, and has of late produced some strangely anomalous situations. The burghers were to give a yearly dinner to a hundred poor scholars on St. Nicholas' Day, to pay fifty-two shillings annually for the use of needy students, and to let all lodgings at half the usual rent for a period of ten years. So the town was 'reconciled,' the scholars returned, and Oxford resumed its ordinary life.

This was a fair sample of many other conflicts which subsequently occurred. They were similar in character, and generally led to similar results—that is, to the subordination of the town and the exaltation of the University. Such émeutes occurred in 1248, 1264, 1297, and 1331, and after the disturbance of 1248 the city corporation had to agree to pay a heavy fine if any burgher

* A general interdict was at the time in force in England.

should in future assault a scholar; and the Mayor and Bailiffs were sworn on accepting office to preserve all the privileges of the University. So frequent were the disturbances even within the walls of St. Mary's, involving on each occasion of bloodshed the Bishop's presence and a formal 'reconciliation' of the polluted edifice, that the distance from Oxford to Lincoln was found a serious inconvenience. In a postscript to a letter of Edward III. to the Pope in 1330, the King suggests that the Bishop should be allowed to authorize the Abbots of Osney and Rewley to act for him on these occasions.* The Pope did not accede to this request, but replied with a Bull, prohibiting all meetings in St. Mary's, which, it is needless to say, was allowed to remain inoperative.

These conflicts culminated in the riots of St. Scholastica's Day (February 10), 1354, which have acquired a perhaps exaggerated notoriety. Some students were drinking in the 'Swyndlestock' inn, near Carfax, and a brutal assault on the landlord led to a tavern brawl, which was carried into the streets after the revellers had been ejected. John de Bereford, the Mayor, a heady and unpopular official, ordered the bell of Carfax (St. Martin's) Church to be rung. This bell was the recognised tocsin of the townsmen, and they flocked together at its summons to do battle with the clerks. The Chancellor de Charlton retorted by ringing the bell of St. Mary's, an equally recognised declaration of war on the part of the University. Free fighting began in the streets during the afternoon, but the days were short, and darkness stopped hostilities before much harm was done. Next day the bells were rung again, and the fray was resumed on a larger scale. A band of some hundreds of roughs from the suburbs and country, who had either been invited by messengers of the citizens, or were prompted by a natural taste for riot and looting, broke into the city and carried all before them. They bore, it is said, an ill-omened black flag, and shouting, 'Slay, havock, smite fast, give good knocks,' certainly seem to have acted up to the tenor of their words. *Tali auxilio*, the town was completely triumphant. Hall after hall was burst open and gutted, heads were broken, chaplains were scalped (if we are to believe Wood), the Blessed Sacrament, which was being carried by the Grey Friars as a pacifying influence, was itself treated with contumely, and a good many of the scholars, and some of the townsmen, too, were left dead in the streets. But in the midst of their triumph misgiving fell upon the citizens. They knew, like those of Ephesus, that they were in danger to be called in question for the day's uproar, and an order was put forth by the leaders to stop all further

* T. G. Jackson, 'The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford,' p. 28.

attacks on the scholars. But the town was deserted, the scholars had fled *en masse*, and a Master of Arts sped to Lincoln to lay the tale of outrage before the Bishop. Vengeance was speedy and complete, the town was laid under the 'major' interdict, and the King took the privileges of both University and town into his own hands to consider and adjudicate upon. The University received its privileges back within a week, and was shortly reinforced by a new charter. To the Chancellor was given the assessment of taxes, the control of the streets, the 'assize' of bread, beer, and wine, the 'assay' of measures and weights, and, in fact, the general management of municipal affairs. John de Bereford, the unpopular Mayor, was lodged in the Marshalsea, the Corporation was condemned to pay a very heavy sum to the University by way of indemnity; and the Mayor, Bailiffs, and sixty of the principal burghers had to attend each year on St. Scholastica's Day a solemn Mass, for the repose of the slain, at the University Church. They were in addition to pay at least a penny each as a contribution on this occasion in aid of poor scholars, and this humiliating custom lingered on into the reign of Charles II. It was not till three years later, in 1357, that the formal 'reconciliation' between the contending parties was effected, and the city received again such remnants of its privileges as had not been given to the enemy. With the riot of St. Scholastica's Day the record of the struggle between town and gown may be closed for the present; the battle was practically over, and the clerks were the victors.

But besides its conflicts with the city, the University suffered from intestine disturbances. Within the narrow area circumscribed by the medieval walls were confined a vast number of boys and young men. It is very difficult to arrive at any conclusion as to their real numbers. Richard Fitz-Ralph (Archbishop of Armagh), declared that in his University days (*circa* 1320) there were 30,000 students, but he was no doubt a *laudator temporis acti*, and was forced to admit that at the time at which he spoke (1357) there were only 6,000. Those who have studied the question consider that there may have been half this latter number, but that 3,000 is a liberal estimate. It was a seething mass of young life to cabin and confine in a very small space, and it is little wonder that without the modern safety-valve of athletic exercises their superfluous energies often found vent in fighting.

Beside the natural turbulence of youth, the cosmopolitanism of the place was a disturbing element. The constant circulation of students through foreign and English Universities has been already alluded to; it was a distinctive feature of the time. The integrity

of European religious belief was not yet shattered by the 'Reformation'; there was one criterion of orthodoxy among all the great schools of the West, and even one tongue, for Latin was the only language of instruction. So that the student from Bologna or Paris found lectures delivered in the language he knew; and much besides that was familiar to him, in the city by the Thames. It was no doubt this common basis of ideas that encouraged the immigration of foreign students, and though it does not appear that the foreigners ever formed a camp for themselves in the internal disturbances of the University, yet they were certainly present in considerable numbers, and were no doubt an additional element of disorder. In 1229 there was a special incursion of French students; for the scholars at Paris, having a difference with the citizens, arising characteristically in a squabble over the price of wine, retaliated in the conventional manner by threatening to leave the French capital, and on the invitation of Henry III. a great number actually did come over and settle in Oxford. There was constant brawling and fighting among the students. Any shibboleth was good enough to form a division. Sometimes the test was scholastic, and 'artists' fought 'jurists,' or 'nominalists' fought 'realists'; but more often it was national, Welsh against Scotch, Scotch against Irish, Irish against Welsh. The favourite side seems to have been North against South, and the contentions between these two latter parties sometimes attained the dignity of a battle. The cry of North and South, indeed, had something peculiarly obnoxious to the authorities, and special precautions were taken against their bloody riotings. The most serious of these interstudent conflicts took place in 1252, and led to the passing of restrictive measures, which abolished the license accompanying the celebration of 'national' festivals, and imposed an oath on all members of the University not to break the peace in this way; the very proctors were to be chosen, one from the North and another from the South, so that there might be no suspicion of partiality.

The early students used migration to other places partly as a refuge in times of real oppression, and partly as a threat to bring the 'insolent' burghers to their senses. Migration was a far easier process than it would be now, for there were no University buildings and no colleges; all that had to 'migrate' were the persons of the students and teachers. The practice seems to have prevailed at Paris, and was no doubt introduced thence to Oxford. Many threats of migration, or actual migrations, are recorded. Such movements took place in 1209, when many clerks went temporarily to Maidstone and Reading; in 1264, when North-

ampton was the city of refuge; and in 1334, the year of the Stamford defection. This last seems to have been the most serious of the attempts to establish a rival University. The grievances which drove the clerks from Oxford on this particular occasion are rather obscure, but a certain number certainly went to Stamford, and there established temporarily halls and a teaching apparatus, all on a small scale. It required royal intervention and some stringent measures to bring them home again; but the back of the revolt was soon broken, and the University of Stamford could boast an existence of only a few months. The movement was sufficient, however, to inspire the University of Oxford with alarm, and so late as 1827 an oath was exacted on admission to degrees that the candidate would neither teach nor study in Stamford as a University. The picturesque little Lincolnshire town retains to this day a trace of its temporary distinction in the name of a house* known as Brasenose Hall, and the George, the fine old inn at the bottom of its high street, is said to be built on the site of an older hostel that sheltered some of the migratory students in 1334. With the Stamford fiasco all medieval attempts to break the monopoly of Oxford and Cambridge finally ceased, and that statute of Walter de Merton, by which he empowered his new college to remove itself bodily on occasion to any other town where learning flourished, remained inoperative.

The young men and boys who crowded thirteenth-century Oxford were lodged in little 'Halls,' or in the houses of private citizens. The 'Halls' were houses rented by a group of students who singled out one of their number, distinguished by seniority or strength of character, to act as 'principal,' look after the commissariat, and generally exercise a sort of headship over his fellow-lodgers. There are said to have been 300 of such 'Halls' at Oxford in the days of Edward I. They were named after the situation or peculiarity of the building—Elm Hall, Ivy Hall, Rose Hall, Broadgates Hall, Glass Hall, Chimney Hall, Leadenporch Hall, Black Hall, White Hall, Vine Hall, Corner Hall; or from the owner—Becket's, Peckwater's, or Bastaple's; or from the sign of an inn which had been turned into a house of students —Elephant, Hawk, Bee, Ape, Nightingale. It is possible that some of those old town-houses mentioned in Domesday as attached to country manors were thus pressed into use; and there are plentiful traces of the medieval Halls to be found dotted about

* On the door of this house was a knocker (twelfth-century) in the form of a nose, which was no doubt brought thither by the refugees from Oxford in 1334. In 1889 Brasenose College bought the house, and removed the knocker to their college hall, where it may now be seen.

the older streets of the present-day Oxford, and in the Roebuck, Golden Cross, Mitre, and other inns.

The life of the students in such places was rough beyond description; their lodgings were squalid and overcrowded, their habits such as to offend all thought of comfort, sanitation, or decency.

'It was in such an age, so unlike our own that we can scarcely picture it to our minds, and in such a place—not diversified by picturesque cloisters and quadrangles, or embowered in peaceful gardens, but encircled with a loopholed wall, crowded with dingy hostelries, intersected by a labyrinth of squalid lanes, and swarming with a mixed multitude of priests and vagrants—that Walter de Merton essayed the great experiment which resulted in the conversion of Oxford and Cambridge into collegiate Universities.'*

Walter de Merton was Chancellor to Henry III. in 1260. In 1264 he founded a house of scholars at Malden, in Surrey, and after securing to the place an ample endowment, arranged that the Malden foundation should maintain twenty of its members in residence at Oxford, so that they might profit by the learning of that place.† In 1294, however, he altered his plan, and transferred to Oxford the headquarters of his scholars. They were to live together in one building under proper supervision, and removed from the evil influences of the crowded town. The buildings (which he never lived to see finished) resembled in many points those of a monastery; the rules which he laid down for the government of the college had much in common with the monastic life. But De Merton's plan was nevertheless entirely original, for the foundation was anti-monastic in spirit, and the scholars were bound by no vows. Merton College was indeed a conscious effort to take University education out of the hands of the regulars who had previously had the monopoly of it. It was to be expected that the Merton scholars should enter the Church—that was a necessity of the times; but they were to be secular priests, and there was to be no asceticism. If a scholar accepted a benefice or assumed a religious habit, he was *ipso facto* deprived of all benefits of the place. The usual religious services were to be carried on in the college, but paid chaplains were to perform them, so that the scholars should not be unduly hampered by such observances.

* Brodrick, 'Memorials of Merton College,' 1885.

† The practice of sending up a certain number of their members to Oxford as students came into vogue among the greater monasteries towards the end of the thirteenth century. Although William of Durham had bequeathed a sum for the maintaining at Oxford of certain students from the monastery at Durham so early as 1249, his fund was not applied to that purpose till thirty or forty years later.

Religion in fact was to sit as lightly upon them as was consistent with the proprieties of the time.

It would be tedious to enumerate the regulations which the founder laid down for the government of the college; that they were minute in detail and far-seeing in their aims is amply proved by the fact that they remained in vogue and sufficed for the conduct of the college until 1856. The supreme authority was vested in a Warden, and the number of scholars was to be regulated by the revenues of the college estates. The scholars were to receive a yearly stipend of 50 marks apiece; they were to wear a uniform dress, to take their meals in common to the ordinary refectory accompaniment of a Latin reading, and to sleep in small dormitories, over each of which a senior scholar was set as 'dean' to keep order.

So Merton was established, and such an excellent example found many imitators. College after college sprang into existence at Oxford, and the oldest Cambridge foundation is confessedly an imitation of Walter de Merton's scheme. It is this housing of the students in college buildings, with a corporate life under strict supervision, which formed the great difference (for good or evil) between the Universities of England and those of the Continent, where students were scattered through the town, finding their own quarters and food, and fending for themselves as best they could.

Merton and the colleges that followed it were at first as little cities of refuge, whither men could fly from the turbulence and squalor of the life in the town. Within those solid walls sober-minded scholars could pursue their study undisturbed, even when 'smiting hard' or giving and taking of 'good knocks' was going on in some bloody riot through the streets outside. It is true that the appointments of the colleges were not luxurious, and that the student's life within them was pursued under conditions which would now be held intolerable; but still they were a paradise compared to the 'Halls.'

As college after college was founded, the leaven leavened the lump; and the sobering influence of such foundations began to make itself felt in the growing peace of the streets. As the collegians increased, the numbers of the students who lodged in citizens' houses or unlicensed Halls diminished. Such students were called 'Chamber-dekens,' and were always through their excesses and turbulence a terror and *bête noire* of the medieval University. At last the number of colleges made it possible for a measure to be passed in 1420 forbidding students to reside in private houses or in any place except colleges and such authorized

Halls as had a common table. So the Chamber-deken was suppressed, and remained extinct for more than four centuries, until he was revived in the 'unattached' man of our own day.

In the history of the early University, the Church of St. Mary the Virgin plays an important part. There was a Church of St. Mary in the same place at the time of Domesday, but nothing is known as to its plan or architecture. Whatever it was, whether 'Saxon' or Early Norman, it seems to have been entirely rebuilt towards the end of the twelfth century, about the time fixed by Mr. Rashdall for the establishment of a definite *studium generale* at Oxford. The tower was added afterwards, *circa* 1280-90, and the noble spire in Edward II.'s reign.* St. Mary's Church was in these early days the only University building,† and in it were held all the public functions of the University as a corporate body, including the ceremonies of the Act, the meetings of congregation, the sittings of the Chancellor's court, and the giving of degrees. In the porch (*in parviso*) students disputed and responded during their first year, and the church was used also as the library and treasure-house. Thomas Cobham, Bishop of Worcester, began the congregation-house, with the library over it, on the north side of the church *circa* 1320, and Adam de Brome, founder of Oriel, finished it structurally after Cobham's death in 1327. Adam de Brome's own chapel, on the north, was built *circa* 1328, but in the fifteenth century the church wanted repair so badly that the choir was entirely rebuilt as we now see it *circa* 1462, and the nave 1490-92.

* See Mr. T. G. Jackson's beautiful and very interesting monograph, 'The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford.'

† The question as to any 'rights' of the University to the church has never been completely set at rest. *Vide* Mr. Jackson, *ut supra*, pp. 69, 70.

CHAPTER IX.

WYKEHAM AND WYCLIF.

ONE of the most favoured of the 'crowd of hungry Poitevins' that invaded England on De la Marche's death in 1247 was William de Valence, the King's half-brother. Honours and grants of land were showered upon him, and amongst them a fine Oxfordshire property. The charter by which Henry assigns 'all our Manor of Bampton to our faithful and well-beloved brother, William de Valence,' is dated 1249. William's more famous grandson, Aymer de Valence, the Earl of Pembroke, obtained a 'licence to crenellate' his house at Bampton in 1315; and so built there a castle, of which some remains are still to be seen. They consist chiefly of the great gate-house, which has been converted into a picturesque farm, and preserves in the bedrooms two bays of fine groining. A holy well hides under bushes in the castle precincts, and in the Tilt-yard—the name of a field hard by—lingers a memory of the days of chivalry. Aymer de Valence, whom Piers Gaveston dubbed 'Joseph the Jew,' from his olive complexion, played an important part in the Scotch wars of Edward I., and in the troubles of Edward II.'s reign. He fought at Bannockburn, met his death in a joust that he himself had organized, and rests beneath one of the most splendid tombs in Westminster Abbey.

Richard of Cornwall, a yet more celebrated brother of the King, was very intimately connected with the county. In 1227 Robert de St. Walery (Earl of Dreux and ex-Duke of Lorraine) was attainted of treason, and Henry III. gave all the 'honour of St. Walery'* to Richard of Cornwall. At first Richard had been on the side of the Barons; there seemed a likelihood of his becoming a leader of the national party, and in 1240 it was with Simon de Montfort that he went crusading. But on his return

* Ambrosden, Mixbury, Beckley, etc.

during a campaign in France he met and married Sancha, the Queen's sister, and thenceforth cast in his lot with the royal party. On his Manor of Beckley he built himself a palace suited to his magnificence, of which traces remained into the present century. Here he and his son Edmund resided constantly, enlarging the Park of Beckley and indulging therein the pleasures of the chase. Richard's wealth was proverbial, and though he is said to have spent a sum equivalent to a million sterling over his election to the Roman* Empire in 1256, he was still reputed the richest man in Europe at his death. His magnificence was equalled by his liberality, and his vigorous piety fanned that Crusading spirit which was always so strong in Oxfordshire. He was a church-builder also, and his badges (the crowned lion-rampant of Poitou or the spread-eagle of the Empire) are still found on the tiles and glass of Oxfordshire churches. In 1271 he died of paralysis, but his fame and munificence were so great, that the founder of the first college dedicated Merton in 1274 'for the repose of the soul of the noble King of the Romans,' as well as for that of his brother the King.

Richard's enormous wealth passed to his son Edmund of Cornwall, who was equally munificent to the Church, and in 1281 added another to the famous Oxford monasteries. It was a Cistercian house, dedicated to the Mother of God, and called Rewley, *de regali loco*. The London and North-Western Railway station occupies in part the site of the monastery; and the only remains to be seen to-day lie by the side of the canal that skirts the back of Worcester College, and consist of a ruined postern and a bit of the precinct wall.

At Ashridge in Bucks, Richard founded a college for a strange Order called Bonhommes,† who never boasted more than three houses in England. He endowed the place with a good deal of Oxfordshire property, including the livings of Chesterton and Ambrosden, and placed there some of the true blood. Beckley seems to have been his favourite residence, and Ashridge his favourite foundation, and at the latter he died in 1300 at the age of fifty. He had no legitimate issue, and devised his great properties by will to Edward I.

Edward I. had always a warm place in his heart for the University, and supported its interests both against the Church and the town. At the very beginning of his reign he encouraged

* An ingenious writer proved conclusively that Oxford was a Roman settlement, or at least known to the Romans; for, he says, there is evidence that Richard, *King of the Romans*, visited the place.

† They seem to have been an offshoot of the Austin Friars.

foreign students to visit the schools by the Thames; and as he passed through Bologna on his return from the Crusade, he brought back with him a famous Italian professor. This was Francesco d'Accorso, who lectured on Civil Law at Oxford, and was by the King's orders given a lodging for himself and his wife in the Palace of Beaumont. There are stories of Dante visiting the place at this time, but they are, it is to be feared, apocryphal.

Oxfordshire did not see so much of the troubles of Edward II.'s reign as it had of those which took place under Henry III., John, and Stephen, and there is little in the county history of the period that calls for special notice.

Piers Gaveston was confined in the Castle of Deddington* immediately before his death. Tradition has, rightly or wrongly, assigned no small part of his unpopularity to a knack of giving displeasingly felicitous nicknames to the great nobles. Aymer de Valence was 'Joseph the Jew'; Warwick was the 'Black Dog,' from his swarthy face and beard. The sobriquets rankled, and when Gaveston pleaded that he had only evacuated Scarborough under promise of his life, Warwick laughed at his protestations. 'The Witch's son,' he said, 'should feel the Black Dog's teeth,' and hurried the favourite away from Deddington to Warwick, and there beheaded him on Blacklow Hill. Gaveston's body was taken to Oxford, and found a temporary resting-place in the church of the Black Friars, who for an epitaph made the punning distich:

> 'Dum Petrus sevit propriam mortem sibi nevit,
> Nunc patet ut nevit truncatus ense quievit.'

After three years the King removed the body to King's Langley in Hertfordshire, where it was buried with considerable pomp.

Philip IV. of France persuaded Edward II. to follow his example in suppressing the Templar Order. Charges of heterodoxy, of atheism, and immorality were brought against the Templars, and after a long inquiry† were held part proven; so in 1311 the Order was dissolved in England. Their religious houses (to the number of fifty-three in all) and goods, were given to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John; and amongst their property were a unique Templar house for sisters at Gosford, near Kidlington, and a preceptory at Temple Cowley.

Besides giving Beaumont to the Carmelites, Edward II. was nominally the founder of Oriel College. Adam de Brome, his

* The site of Deddington Castle is marked to-day by nothing more than a series of green mounds.

† In the course of it the curse of torture is said to have been first introduced into England.

almoner, from whose munificence Oriel really sprung, transferred his young college to the King; and got him to refound it from motives of security, judging that it would thus have greater protection against the troubles of the time. There were now five colleges in Oxford—Merton, Balliol, University, Exeter, and Oriel. 'The dark shadow of the reign of the second Edward rests on the college of Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter, who perished fighting in the streets of London in the cause of his unfortunate master. Masses for the soul of Hugh Despenser, the unworthy favourite of that unhappy Prince, are enjoined to be offered up at Oriel.'

It was Adam de Brome who finished the old congregation house and library, and also built that north-west chapel of St. Mary's Church which bears his name. The magnificent spire of the same church was also finished in Edward II.'s reign.*

A little later in the century (1340) Queen Philippa's chaplain Eglesfield, founded Queen's College; giving his royal mistress the credit of it, as Adam de Brome had given the credit of Oriel to Edward II.

William of Wykeham laid the foundation-stone of New College on the morning of his fifty-fifth birthday, March 5, 1380; and on April 14, 1386, the society took possession of the buildings, marching in with much pomp and singing. The title New, which has clung to the college for more than 500 years, still serves to mark the departure which it inaugurated. It was not new in theory in the sense that Merton had been, but rather in the splendour and completeness of its buildings and general arrangements. William of Wykeham was an architect first, a statesman and a Churchman afterwards. It was in his capacity of architect† that he had first risen into fame, and among all the

* All interested in the subject should read Mr. T. G. Jackson's 'Church of St. Mary the Virgin.'

† The actual share in the design and execution of a building, taken by a man like Wykeham must always be a matter of doubt. Mr. Jackson has some interesting remarks on this point ('Church of St. Mary,' p. 117). Speaking of Sir Reginald Bray, to whom are attributed the designs of the Perpendicular Church of St. Mary, Oxford; the Priory, Great Malvern; St. George's, Windsor; and Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster, he says: 'Bray and Wykeham filled offices of State which must have made demands on their time and thoughts inconsistent with any great proficiency in technical skill. That the great Churchmen and laymen who get the credit of so many architectural triumphs gave general directions as to scale, arrangement, and even to some extent the architectural character of their buildings, is intelligible enough; but that Wykeham—whose political engagements were such that we read nothing was done in the kingdom without him—should have been able to design the architectural details of his buildings; or that Bray, Knight of the Bath and Garter, Privy Councillor, and a good deal more besides, should have known enough of practical masonry to imagine and construct the marvellous

cares of statecraft and the high offices of his later years he seems to have found the keenest pleasure in building. In the school and cathedral at Winchester, and in the castle at Windsor, he reared himself imperishable monuments; and he left New College so perfect a thing that it has served as a model for all the great colleges that were to follow, so perfect that posterity found nothing to add to it except the disfigurement of an upper story in the front quad (added 1675). The plan is sufficiently familiar to us now—a great quadrangle, with a broad lawn in the middle, and a walk running round; on the north, the splendid chapel and hall under one roof; on the west, the gateway tower* and Warden's lodging; on the south and east the lower ranges of sleeping and living rooms; and, as an after-thought, the great cloister, with its keel-shaped roof, flung out west of the chapel, to be a place of safe recreation for the scholars. The chapel was a very central feature of the whole design. The early colleges had generally no chapels of their own, and were content to use the parish church. Thus, Merton worshipped in St. John the Baptist's parish church, Oriel in St. Mary the Virgin's, Exeter in St. Mildred's, Balliol in St. Mary Magdalen's. Besides being the founder of New College, Wykeham was also the founder of Winchester, the first English public school. He was the first to conceive the idea of founding a school and college in that intimate connection, a system imitated by several later founders.† His boys at Winchester were to proceed in due course to his New College at Oxford, where seventy of them were to be maintained under a Warden. Two of them were to study medicine and two astronomy, twenty civil or canon law, and the remaining forty-six arts and theology. To the society were attached ten chaplains, three clerks, and sixteen choristers. These latter were always an important element in the corporate life of the college, and by their aid the musical service

vaults at Windsor and Westminster, which are far beyond the conception, much less the realization, of any dilettante, however accomplished, will never seem probable to those who know what the production of architecture involves. Sir Reginald Bray may have imparted ideas as to the size and general character of the new St. Mary's, and have criticised the work in progress; he may have contributed to the expense, as we know he did at Windsor, and so have connected himself with the building in another way; but the real architect was, no doubt, some skilful master-mason, trained in the sound traditions of the art, capable of correcting and throwing into shape the rough suggestions of his employer, and of bringing them to a practical result.'

* In a niche over the gateway is a figure of the Blessed Virgin (to whom the college is dedicated), and on either side kneel an angel and the founder.

† *Cf.* the connection made by Henry VI. between Eton and King's, Cambridge; projected by Wolsey between Ipswich and Cardinal College; by Sir Thomas White between Merchant Taylors' and St. John's; by Elizabeth, between Westminster and Christ Church; and some others on a minor scale.

at New College is to-day maintained at the highest pitch of excellence; although no Boy-Bishop is now chosen from their number to say Mass in full pontificals on Holy Innocents' Day. Day by day, when they rose in the morning and when they went to bed at night, the scholars were bidden to say a prayer for the soul of the founder, for his parents, and for the souls of Edward III., the Queen, and the Black Prince.

Wykeham obtained the site for New College with little difficulty. The town was glad enough that he should build on it, for it was a foul and unoccupied place; and a dirty lane which ran under the city walls, and was now closed by the new buildings, had been a notorious haunt of thieves and prostitutes. He so planned the new work as to use the old city fortification on north and east for his boundary wall, stipulating that the college should henceforth be at the cost of keeping it in repair. This obligation has ever since been loyally discharged, and the city walls still stand in excellent preservation at the back of New College, where they may be very conveniently examined. On a bastion at the corner was reared the curiously severe tower which contains the college bells, and in its half-ecclesiastical and half-military character forms a fourteenth-century counterpart to D'Oily's eleventh-century tower of St. Michael's at the North Gate.

The genius of the great architect did not leave itself without witness in New College properties through the county. The designs of the chancel at Adderbury and of the fine tithe barns at the same place, at Upper Heyford and at Swalcliffe, are all attributed to him, and his own eyes may have superintended the erection of the buildings.

With New College was completed what may be called the first group of colleges, including Merton, University, Balliol, Exeter, Oriel, Queen's. A considerable interval was to elapse before the founding of modest Lincoln in 1429 and of magnificent All Souls and Magdalen in 1444 and 1480.

This seems a convenient place to say something as to Lollardism, and Wyclif its hierophant, whom William of Wykeham withstood to the face, and against whose teaching he entered a vigorous protest in the foundation of New College.

The Lollards were reformers, and their reform play in the second part of the fourteenth century was very much the same* as that of the Friars in the first part of the thirteenth. But the actors

* The history of the early Friars is strangely repeated in the 'poor priests,' organized by Wyclif, whom he sent out to wander through the length of the land. They were pledged to strict poverty, wore russet gowns, and went from village to village preaching by the wayside in the English tongue.

were changed. From being reformers the Friars had in less than 100 years grown to need reform themselves above all others. Their covetousness, their arrogance and idleness, were chief points of the Lollard attack.

The drain of the interminable French wars on manhood and money, the national exhaustion following the Black Death, and the oppressive measures taken to remedy the disorganization of labour, had produced a feeling of general discontent. It showed itself in State through the socialistic poems of Longland and the schemes of Lancaster, and in Church by Lollardism, by the ranting of John Ball, and by the startling heterodoxies of Wyclif.

The abuses which Lollardism wished to reform in the Church related rather to her administration and discipline than her doctrine. The odious exactions of the Pope, the grievous inequality of clerical incomes, the intense worldliness of Church dignitaries, the corruption of the monastic, and especially of the mendicant, Orders—these were the chief objects of the reformers' attention. Questions of doctrine, transubstantiation and the like, only occupied a second place in the programme.

It was his notions of temporal reform that stirred up opposition to Wyclif. If he had confined himself to the teaching of doctrines then deemed heterodox, he would probably have called upon himself no greater censure than did half a dozen other great scholars, who had equally delighted in the paradox of new-fangled notions, and whom the University had sheltered in her bosom with that tolerance which is sometimes so surprising in the Middle Ages.

Details of Wyclif's life are wanting till after he became a notability, and there is room for several colleges to call him alumnus. Queen's, Merton, and Balliol put forward claims, and it is certain that in 1360 he was Master of the latter college. In 1361 he seems to have relinquished that post for the rectory of Fillingham in Lincolnshire, perhaps to get more time for study, perhaps because the living was worth more than the mastership. The revenues of Fillingham were enough to allow him to return to Oxford as a private student, and for two years he lived at Queen's, renting rooms without being a member of the college.

In 1365 Archbishop Islip made him head of the new Canterbury College, which he founded by turning the Benedictines of Canterbury out of their Oxford Hall. But Cardinal Langham, the next Archbishop, gave their house back to the monks, and Wyclif was dismissed from the headship. In 1368 he got a dispensation from parish duties in order to study at Oxford. In 1369 he exchanged the living of Fillingham for that of Ludgershall in Bucks, and in

1375-76 got the Crown rectory of Lutterworth, which he held till his death.

Wyclif was the last of the great Oxford schoolmen. He delighted in sophistic reasoning, and, besides his lectures and sermons, was the author of innumerable Latin pamphlets on the vexed questions of the day. In many of them paradoxical and quibbling subtilty is pushed to the verge of puerility. In his free-thinking, both as regards Church and State, he reflected the free-thinking spirit abroad at that date; he was idolized at Oxford, and had at his back the practically unanimous support of the University. He took his degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1374, and it was not till after that date that he began to launch his new doctrines. He championed the patriotic resistance to Papal claims, the cause of the secular against the regular clergy, and friars were the object of his special indignation. He was supported loyally by John of Gaunt, the great Duke of Lancaster; and his following was strong enough to enable him to make light of anathemas alike of Pope and Archbishop. It was not till near the end of his life that the aristocratic party, becoming anxious at the fancied connection of his doctrines with the peasant revolt, grew lukewarm in their support, and Wyclif retired for a few years to his rectory of Lutterworth. Except in the jargon of Exeter Hall, he was not so great a practical reformer as Grostête. His life and fame were essentially scholastic, and in his translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue he vindicates his claim to a place in that new school of English writers of which Chaucer and Longland were members.

Among the chief of Wyclif's followers at Oxford were Nicholas Hereford, a Doctor of Divinity, and Philip Repyngdon, an Augustinian canon of Leicester. Nicholas of Hereford preached two famous sermons, one at St. Mary's and one on Ascension Day, in St. Frideswide's churchyard, in which he bitterly attacked the monks, and maintained the Lollard doctrines.

But the subsequent career of these reforming zealots is worth noting. Nicholas became Chancellor of Hereford, proceeded actively against Lollards, and took Carthusian vows at Coventry. Repyngdon was made Abbot of Leicester, Chancellor of Oxford, Bishop of Lincoln, and obtained one of the few Cardinal's hats that have crossed the Channel.

It was during the celebration of Mass that Wyclif himself was smitten with paralysis at Lutterworth, and died in 1384. With Wyclif's death Lollardy flagged, but it was not suppressed till 1411, when a strict decree against it was passed at Oxford, and all graduates on admission to their degrees were made to swear

that they would uphold none of Wyclif's propositions, of which the Church had been at the pains to condemn no less than 267.

The last word was said by the Council of Constance, which in 1415 ordered the bones of the great schoolman to be exhumed and burnt. By an irony of fate, it was Cardinal Repyngdon who had to carry out this sentence, for Lutterworth lay in his diocese. But he evaded such an odious duty, and the bone-burning did not take place till 1427, under the Cardinal's successor.

So Lollardy died.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

THE fourteenth century was remarkable for the growth of the power of Parliament, and especially for the growth of the power of the Commons. Simon de Montfort's summoning of representatives of the Commons to the Parliament of 1265 was little more than an isolated experiment. It was not till thirty years later, in 1295, that Edward I. established that practice on a firmer footing, and in 1341 the division of Parliament into two houses was made by Edward III. The expenses of the French wars necessitated the summoning of the Parliament at frequent and fairly regular intervals to satisfy the King's needs; but the towns were at first not at all inclined to appreciate the privilege of sending representatives, for to send them involved a considerable expense in maintenance and in other respects. Thus, in 1302, 30 Edward I., and in 1305, Chipping Norton sent members to Parliament, but were relieved of the privilege in 40 Edward III. Witney, too, which had members in the Parliaments of Edwards I. and II., only continued to send them till 33 Edward III.; and the same thing happened with Deddington, which sent members in 30 Edward I. and in 32 and 33 Edward III., but not since. Woodstock returned members in Edward I.'s reign, and did not gain exemption from the 'privilege' till its charter of Henry VI., in 1453. But the loyal little borough soon began to send burgesses to Parliament again, for it had representatives in the Oxford Parliament of 1 Mary, and from 1570 till 1831 two members were constantly returned. Banbury did not send a member till the charter of 1 Mary, and Burford and Henley, if they ever actually returned burgesses to Parliament, ceased to do so *tempore* Edward III.

The determining of what towns should send members lay at first in the hands of the Sheriff. He sent in to the Crown the names of such places as he considered sufficiently important, and

able to bear the burden involved in the return of members, and the towns on their side used every effort to avoid the costly honour.

As Parliamentary custom crystallized and representation became general, it was felt to be convenient that the Parliament should always meet at one place, and Westminster became its fixed seat. From the thirteenth century onwards there are no more Parliaments at Oxford, except in times of plague or other deadly epidemic in London, unless we reckon that wan shadow of a Parliament which sat there under Charles I. The glory which Oxford had so long enjoyed of being a constantly selected meeting-place of the great council of the nation was now departed.

The most important places in the county at the close of the thirteenth century were, putting Oxford aside, Bampton, Banbury, Bicester, Burford, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Deddington, Henley, Thame, Watlington, Witney, and Woodstock. Adderbury and Bloxham had also a certain importance, but Bensington and Dorchester were already in a state of decay.

Woodstock is one of the towns which claim the honour of being the birthplace of Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet, and Chaucer's house is still pointed out in Woodstock Street, though the present building has little of old work about it, and is completely modernized. On the whole, it is probable that the poet was neither born nor bred in Woodstock; though he no doubt often visited the place through his connection with the Court, and very possibly drew some of his descriptions from the local scenery.

The first connection between Woodstock and the Chaucer family as property-owners appears in 1411, when the Queen granted Sir Thomas Chaucer the manors of Hanborough, Stonesfield, Wootton, and Woodstock; but this was eleven years after Geoffrey Chaucer's death, and again it is not at all certain that Thomas Chaucer was Geoffrey's son.

The title 'Chaucer's House' does not appear in deeds till the latter half of the sixteenth century, and it seems to have been originally called 'Hanwell House.'

Sir Thomas Chaucer's claim to be the son of the poet appears to rest principally on the occurrence of the arms of Roet on Sir Thomas's tomb at Ewelme. Geoffrey Chaucer's wife is said to have been Philippa Roet, but all that is certainly known is that her name was Philippa. Sir Thomas was a man of much wealth, for besides his estate at Hanborough, Stonesfield, Wootton, Woodstock, and thereabouts, he inherited with his wife Matilda (daughter of Sir John Burghersh) the estates of Ewelme, Oxon, and Donnington Castle, Berks.*

* *Vide* Marshall's 'History of Woodstock,' chap. vii.

Though a considerable amount of clearing had been done, and much more land was cultivated than at the time of Domesday, yet a great part of the county was under forest. The beech thickets covered the Chilterns for miles, and still formed in some sort a barrier between London and the Oxfordshire midlands; as they had done long ago between Dobuni and Cassivelauni, between the Saxon raiders of the coast and the wasting Roman civilization of the interior.

'Beat a bush, and it's odds you start a thief,' was an old Chiltern saw, and the traveller might thank fortune who was allowed to climb the chalk slopes and wend his way over the turf and through the thickets, without having to fight for his own with these gentry of the road. Long ago Leofstan of St. Albans had tried to make some clearance, but the wood grew up again, and was a well-recognised danger of the road between London and Oxford. Brunetto Latini, Dante's tutor, who died in 1294, describes his journey from London to Oxford. He found the roads infested with robbers, and passed a night at Sherburn Castle. A curious memory of the time is preserved in the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds. The Steward was at first appointed to suppress these pirates of the wood, and save not only travellers, but also the inhabitants of the district, from their depredations. Though the bandits have long passed away, the office is continued as a sinecure, and granted, as is well known, on application to members of Parliament who wish to resign. By thus accepting an office of honour, and emolument (its salary is £1 per annum) under the Crown, they render their seat void, and are so entitled to the release from their Parliamentary duties, which they could not otherwise claim. In this constitutional sense the title dates from the middle of the last century.

Besides Chiltern, there was south-west of Oxford on the Berkshire border, Bagley Wood, another noted haunt of footpads; which covered the slopes where the road crosses the hills to Abingdon, and close adjoining it was Cumnor Hirst, where the Abbots of Abingdon had a sick-house.

On the east were the grouped chases of Beckley, Stowood, Headington, and Shotover; on the north the vast extent of royal Woodstock and Wychwood. The very name of Bampton-in-the-Bush shows what the country was like thereabouts in the great Thames plain between the Berkshire and the Shipton downs. So late as a century ago, says a historian of the place, 'there were no certain roads from Bampton. Men struck across the scrub and waste, and found their way as best they could to Witney, Burford, or what not.'*

* Giles, 'History of Bampton.'

All the river valleys were subject to incessant floods, and the wide wastes of Otmoor were as entirely unreclaimed as they had been in the times of the Heptarchy. In the summer Otmoor was little better than a swamp; and in the winter, to anyone looking down on it from Arncott Wood on Beckley hillside, it must often have appeared an inland sea, with the line of the ruined Roman Causeway running across it from Alchester. The little villages which fringed it had a common right of pasture on the moor, and sent into it in summer a few cattle to earn a precarious livelihood. But it was at the best a poor feeding-place, and the beasts were subject to malarial disease.

The fourteenth century saw a vast amount of material progress in spite of the crippling influence of the French wars and the Black Death, and in nothing was that progress more remarkable than in the art of building. As the round arch of the Normans had in the twelfth century given way to the acutely-pointed arch and long, lancet-shaped window of the Early English mode; so at the end of the thirteenth century the Early English in turn began to make room for what is known as the Decorated style.* This last is generally admitted to be the most beautiful of the various great fashions of church-building which have prevailed in England. The long, slit-like 'lancets,' which only half lit the church, gave way to broad windows of several 'lights,' with a wealth of flowing tracery in the head.

In Oxfordshire are many fine Decorated examples. St. Mary's spire at Oxford and the chapel of Merton College have already been mentioned; but even from so cursory a sketch as this we cannot omit the Abbey Church of Dorchester, with its fantastic choir raised by some wizard's hand; and in the north of the county the sister churches of Adderbury and Bloxham.

From those high grounds where the old Dobuni built their hill forts of Tadmarton and Madmarston, a man looking east can see below him, in a straight line, three famous spires reared in this fourteenth century. A local jingle compares them thus:

> 'Bloxham for length,
> Adderbury for strength,
> And King's Sutton for beauty;'

but Bloxham is the best of the three.

This Decorated style was but of brief duration. It extended, roughly speaking, over the reigns of two Edwards—from 1307 to 1377. On its heels trod closely Perpendicular, with straighter

* Exceptionally interesting illustrations of that transition period, when Early English was giving way to Decorated, may be found in two little Oxfordshire churches—Shilton, near Burford, and Piddington, five miles south-east from Bicester.

lines, flat roofs, and florid ornamentation; and in Wykeham's college buildings of 1388 Decorated has disappeared as completely as if it had never existed.

Besides the churches, there were springing up through the county a number of great houses of which traces remain to this day. The awful severity of the Norman donjon had given way to the well-known 'Edwardian' castle, with its various baileys and buildings containing rooms vastly increased at once in number and habitability. But in addition to the 'castles,' wealthy land-owners were raising 'houses' proper, built strongly enough to admit of some defence, often surrounded by a moat, but still 'houses,' and not 'castles.' Some parts still remain, at Cottisford (six miles north of Bicester), and Cogges by Witney, of two such houses that were certainly built before the close of the thirteenth century. The old manor-house at the first place was built by the De Cottisford family. It has a genuine Early English window, and a later chimney that was, perhaps, part of some additions made by Sir Roger de Cottisford, Sheriff of the county *circa* 1360. In the water-meadows behind Witney town there stands an isolated cluster of buildings—Cogges Church, once the chapel of an alien priory; the vicarage, formed out of the remains of the conventual buildings; and the manor-house, which in part is the oldest of the three. Cogges was one out of the enormous number of Odo of Bayeux's manors at Domesday. Then it passed to the Oxfordshire family of De Arsic, of whose castle the moat and foundations are still to be traced. But in the middle of the thirteenth century De Arsic died out, and the great family of the De Greys, of Yorkshire, bought the place. To one of these last must probably be attributed the fine Early English work which survives in the Manor-house of Cogges.

The De Greys acquired a large property in the county, and Rotherfield Greys, three miles from Henley, perpetuates their memory. There John De Grey built (about 1350) Greys Court, a rambling great castle of massive brickwork, whose strength is still attested by a picturesque and ivy-clad ruin.

Not very far from Greys Court, at Stonor, in a sweep formed by a valley through the swelling chalk hills, the eponymous family of Stonor built themselves a stately home. The present Stonor Park is of Tudor date, but the flint chapel of the older house, dating from Edward II.'s reign, remains intact so far as its walls are concerned, and has remained constantly in Catholic hands from the day of its foundation.

At Sherburn, near Watlington, Warine de Lisle got leave to crenellate his house in 1377, and so began the existing castle.

Though much modernized, the building is still very imposing, a huge square block of masonry with round towers at the angles, rising sheer from the water of a broad moat, and only to be approached by drawbridges. The position was always one of great strength, as Robert D'Oily and others probably before his day had recognised; commanding as it did both the Icknield Way running from east to west, and also the north and south roads across the Chilterns from London to Oxford. It was at Sherburn that the Barons, with Thomas of Lancaster, met in 1321 to concert action against the Despencers, and when the movement failed, Warine de Lisle the elder paid the penalty of failure on a York gallows.

A little further east along the Ichnield Way at Henton lived a family of De Malyns, of whose house only the moat remains. They lived there for the best part of 200 years from the middle of the thirteenth century, and interest attaches to their history (of which a good deal is known) by reason of a series of funeral memorials in the beautiful church of Chinnor hard by. There are to be seen brasses of many of the family, including those of Sir Esmoun de Malyns, who died in 1385, and of Reginald, in whom the line became extinct in 1430. An act of vandalism, which covered these effigies with woodwork early in the seventeenth century, resulted fortunately in preserving them in a strangely perfect state, till they were discovered in repairs some thirty years ago.

It would be tedious to speak of Boarstall (just over the Bucks border, where the great gate-house of the Fitz-Nigels' castle still astonishes the spectator), of Shutford, and of other houses; but there is one fourteenth-century pile in the north of the county which is too stately and too beautiful to be passed over. Broughton Castle (three miles from Banbury) dates in great part from the very first years of the fourteenth century, when Thomas de Broughton built it. William of Wykeham afterwards bought it, and gave it to his grand-nephew, Sir Thomas Wykeham, who largely modified the house in the fifteenth century. From him it passed by marriage to the Fiennes (Lords Say and Sele), and they in turn made those additions which now give the place an Elizabethan air. The broad moat covered with water-lilies, the ivied curtain walls, the great gate-house commanding the bridge which spans the water, and the striking outline of the house, broken by many gables, and showing a strange medley of fourteenth and sixteenth century architecture, are warrant enough and to spare for placing the Broughton of to-day among the most beautiful of English homes.

Not in their houses alone is the memory of the old Oxfordshire gentlemen recalled. There are their graves. The county was always a famous recruiting-ground for the Crusades, and it is likely that the same martial spirit was strong to send many stout hearts to the Continent in the great struggle of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. How many went, and how many found a last resting-place in France, worn out by hardship or laid low in petty skirmish or on glorious battle-field, we do not know, but the county is rich enough in military monuments to make it impossible to enumerate them here. Edward the Black Prince, the most romantic figure of the English Middle Age, was born at Woodstock; and is said to have been educated at Oxford within the walls of Queen's, that college which his mother, Philippa, endowed. Tradition has it that the glories of his life and the tragedy of his death are commemorated in some fine carving on Alkerton Church, in the north of the county. A cornice or corbel table carved with groups of figures runs round the outside of the clerestory. On the south side, beginning from the east, a fanciful eye can trace 'a dragon, emblematic of the dedication of the church to St. Michael; next, the guardian angel of the Black Prince as a child; the Lamb of God, setting forth his youthful innocence; two of his rapacious nurses with grotesque heads; two priests the boy's tutors; his lady-mother Philippa, with her dog; his sports—hunting, archery, and falconry; his lady-love with her amusements—a pet squirrel, the harp, a tame bear, and the organs; the lion of England; Edward III., the Black Prince's father, with a sceptre; the fleur-de-lys of France; the Prince himself, followed by three trumpeters supposed to represent his triumphal return to London after French victories. Then in allusion to his untimely death, follow figures setting forth the joys of heaven; spiritual emblems—the pelican an image of our Lord, the holy dove, three angels bearing up the Black Prince's soul; and lastly, Michael triumphing over the old Dragon.' *Se non è vero è ben trovato*, and at least a pretty conceit.

Edward III. had himself been educated at Oxford, and defended the privileges of the University with jealous care. Beaumont had gone out of fashion as a royal residence. The King indeed still went there on occasion, but it was permanently occupied by the Carmelites, to whom Edward II. had made it over. Even before that, royal pensioners and dependents had probably found quarters in it, and we have seen that Edward I. made room there for the Italian professor (whom he had brought over from Bologna) and his family. Woodstock was as much in favour as ever, and Edward's sons (the Black Prince and Thomas of Cornwall) were born there.

Edward III. confirmed by *inspeximus* the whole of the charters and privileges of the University. His care, indeed, seems to have been thoroughly paternal; he busied himself even about the more prosaic details of sanitation. A proclamation was issued ordering a general paving of the city, and forbidding the depositing of ordure of any sort in the streets, or the butchering of cattle within the walls. The butchers did not take this last regulation at all kindly, and remonstrated, saying that they had always butchered beasts in the city, and indeed paid a special fee-farm to the King for the privilege. If no beasts were to be killed, then no fee-farm would be paid. This argument seemed unanswerable, and the intramural killing went on until pestilence and the horrors of the Black Death convinced everyone that this and other noxious practices must be stopped. So the butchers consented to slaughter outside the walls, and used a lane running under the outside of the wall on the west side of Southgate for that purpose, which was henceforth known by the euphonious title of Slaying Lane.* It is no pleasant picture of the city streets that the proclamation calls up. No 'dirt, filth, dung, or any other nauseous excrement,' is henceforth to be laid in the streets, whereby the air had formerly become so infected that many of the nobility declined going thither, and the scholars and townsmen contracted diseases of which many of them died.

In such unsavoury places and in the overcrowded lodging-houses the Black Death found, no doubt, too apt a breeding ground. That awful and obscure pestilence had its origin in the East, and, moving westward through Europe, reached England in 1349. It appeared first in Dorset, and is said to have landed at Lyme, the same little seaport that afterwards saw Monmouth's disembarkation. Thence it moved through the length and breadth of the land, working such havoc as has never been seen before or since. Some say that in that great outbreak there perished a third of the entire population of England, some say a half. We have no special records of the devastation which it wrought in Oxford, but from the circumstances of the case it was probably more than ordinarily terrible. The exceptional mortality among priests is particularly mentioned,† and there were fitful recrudescences of the plague till 1369. Society was completely disorganized, and many an Oxfordshire country church must have

* In Slaying Lane the slaughter-houses proved such a nuisance, and the Trill mill-stream grew so polluted with refuse, that the butchers were eventually moved thence to Lombard Street.

† At Newton Purcell, a little village in North Oxfordshire, there were no less than six Rectors between 1349 and 1354.

remained for years without a priest to serve it, and many an Oxfordshire farm untilled for lack of men to turn the soil. The upheaval that followed, the absolute dearth of labour, the wild strikes, and the cruel measures by which the upper classes strove to bring the price of labour back to what it had been before the outbreak, are matters of general, rather than local history.

Outbreaks of pestilence such as this bring home to us the advantage of a system in general vogue at a later date, whereby the greater colleges had attached to them country houses in the neighbourhood in which their members could seek refuge when epidemics were raging at Oxford. Thus, Corpus Christi College had such a house at Witney, Trinity at Garsington, and many others at different places.*

Richard II. figures little in Oxford history. He was too young to take much part in the Wycliffite controversies; but one circumstance may be recorded to his credit in connection with the University, that in 1391 he rejected a petition presented to him by the Commons to forbid villeins sending their sons to Oxford.

In 1387 a sharp skirmish took place on the Upper Thames between the forces of the Lords Appellant and those of the King's favourite, Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford.† The scene was Radcot Bridge, where the road crosses the river between Bampton and Faringdon. The bridge, a good deal older than Richard II., with three arches and a heavy buttress in the middle niched for a figure of the Virgin, is still standing, though a 'cut' has diverted the traffic to another channel. Robert de Vere was one of that great house which bore for some centuries the title of Earls of Oxford, and to whom Henry II. had granted 'the third penny of the pleas of the county.' Like Michael de la Pole, Robert de Vere had at first fled when impeached by the Appellants, but afterwards, raising forces in the West, he marched across England. At Radcot however, he found his progress barred, and the bridge held by the enemy. A brisk engagement ensued, but Robert was taken in the rear, and surrounded by Gloucester and Derby's forces. He was so hard put to it at length that he plunged into the icy‡ river with his armour on, and swimming down-stream with difficulty saved his life. He subsequently fled oversea, lost all his possessions,§ and died in Flanders, in 1392.

Henry IV. resided constantly at Woodstock, and also used the old Palace of Beaumont more than any King since the time that

* See *post*, p. 144.
† He had lately been made Marquis of Dublin and Duke of Ireland.
‡ December 20, 1387.
§ His uncle, Aubrey de Vere, was allowed to succeed to the estates.

Edward II. had made it over to the Carmelites. Amongst other acts of grace* to the University, he materially extended the radius of the Chancellor's jurisdiction. It had previously been a vexed question whether the Chancellor's rights and jurisdiction extended beyond the city wall, and if so, how far it reached. The city had begun to expand northward at a very early date. Houses lined the far side of the north city ditch; outside St. Michael's and the North Gate a group of houses clustered round St. Mary Magdalene, and from that church a line of buildings began to stretch northward towards the present St. Giles'. When the riots of St. Scholastica's Day, in 1354, had led to the University being reinforced with all kinds of fresh privileges, the Chancellor had at once claimed to exercise his newly-acquired rights in the parishes of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Giles. Richard Amory who then held the land in question direct from the Crown, combated such pretensions without success, and the Chancellor's jurisdiction over these parishes was confirmed. It was now still further extended, and in 1401 Henry IV. defined its limits as Godstow Bridge on the north, the Lazaretto of St. Bartholomew in Cowley meadows on the east, Bagley Wood on the south, and Botley on the west.

Henry IV.'s reign was haunted by the spectre of Richard II. Some mystery that hung over Richard's end had apparently put it out of Henry's power to give satisfactory proof of his predecessor's death, and the dead King constantly returned to trouble him in the form of pretenders. One of these revenants, the priest Maudlen or Magdalen, has enough connection with Oxford to warrant his mention here. The story is well known. The conspirators, among whom were the Earls of Kent, Huntingdon, Salisbury, and Rutland, Sir Thomas Blunt, and others, arranged that a tournament should be got up in 1400 at Oxford. To this the King was to be invited, and as he watched the jousts, trusty hands were to set upon and murder him. The King, suspecting nothing, promised to come to the lists; but the Duke of York, Rutland's father, got the secret from his son, and so the plot leaked out. The conspiring Earls were forced to a premature move. They took the priest Magdalen (who closely resembled Richard II.), dressed him in royal robes, and proclaimed him King as Richard II., who they said had escaped from his captivity. But the conspiracy was short-lived. The insurgent forces melted away; Huntingdon, Kent, and Salisbury lost their heads, and some score of other plotters were hanged at a place called Greenditch, on the north of Oxford. Greenditch occupied nearly

* He gave a large parcel-gilt cross to the University.

the position of Rackham Lane, and seems to have been a common scene for executions. It lay near another watercourse called Woodditch, by which stood the city gallows.

Henry V. was possibly educated at Queen's College. He is said to have occupied a chamber situated over the gateway which opened on New College Lane. Two of the old windows of this room are preserved in the present library, and on a brass plate is the commemorative inscription :

'Imperator Britanniæ
Triumphator Galliæ
Hostium victor et sui
Henricus Quintus hujus Collegii
Et cubiculi (minuti satis)
Olim magnus incola.'

In 1415, a century after the suppression of the Templar houses, a second confiscation of Church property took place. During the time that the Kings of England were also Dukes of Normandy, certain celebrated Norman monasteries (such as Bec, Fécamp, etc.) had been allowed to build, or had been granted religious houses in England, and the number of these foreign-held houses, and of the properties attached to them, were very considerable. The position had entirely changed since the date of their foundation, and it was felt to be an anomaly that large revenues should be transmitted by these English monasteries to their mother-houses in Normandy at a time when France and England were at war. The King was nothing loath to listen to a suggestion that the confiscation of such revenues would be a valuable aid to the prosecution of the war, and so these houses were suppressed under the title of 'alien priories' in 1415.

Among the alien priories fell two small Oxfordshire houses, Cogges, which William de Arsic founded in honour of the Blessed Trinity in 1103, and Minster Lovell, founded *circa* 1210 by Maud Lovell. Cogges belonged to the great abbey of Fécamp,* and Minster Lovell to Ivry; and some traces of the conventual buildings still remain at the former place. These were the only alien houses in the county, but other French monasteries possessed land and tithes in Oxfordshire, as St. Elbrulf at Charlton-on-Otmoor. These were taken away at the time of the suppression of the alien houses, and given to English monasteries.

* Fécamp—Abbatia Fiscanensis, and putative fount of the Benedictine liqueur!

CHAPTER XI.

THE MEDIEVAL UNIVERSITY.

BY the end of the fourteenth century the system of the medieval University may be said to have reached its fullest development. Usage had crystallized into law, old rights had been defined and confirmed, new rights had been granted by charter; and it may be convenient at this stage to pass in very brief review the academic machinery and its manner of working.

In respect to numbers, there was probably no very great difference between the fifteenth-century University and that of to-day, but the student population had diminished considerably since the enthusiastic days of the early thirteenth century. The causes of this decline in numbers have been already hinted at, and we can have no doubt that it was real enough to bring about the closing of a great many so-called schools and halls. If we put the number of students at 2,500, we shall not perhaps be very far out.

As regards class, the scholars were still drawn from a lower stratum than is now the case. Some of them were in a state of abject beggary, others of squalid poverty, and in 1391 the Commons presented a petition to Richard II. begging him to restrain villeins from sending their sons to Oxford, and thereby getting them enfranchised — a petition which the King to his credit refused. But, on the other hand, signs are not wanting, as the fifteenth century drew to a close, that the vigorous and blatant democracy of the place was getting toned down, that the class of the students was being levelled up, and that the authorities themselves were beginning to cultivate those tuft-hunting propensities which popular prejudice still attributes to them.

Students entered Oxford at an earlier, and left it at a later, age than is nowadays possible; but then it must be remembered

that a University career in the fifteenth century covered, not only the years of boyhood now spent at a public school, but also those of mature study and middle-aged research. There appear to have been no limits of age whatever, and though fifteen years may represent the usual time of entry, neither fourteen nor twenty can be taken as the extremes of the scale. Once at Oxford, the aspirant found the road to academic honours, if not thorny, at least long. If he wished to take an M.A. degree, he would need ten years' residence, and if he sought theological honours, he would see twenty summers pass at Oxford before he could wear a Doctor of Divinity's robes.

A very young boy on coming to Oxford was at first placed in a grammar-school under the charge of a master of grammar. These masters of grammar were a sort of second-rate dons, whose duty was to teach the boys in their charge the Latin grammar, and to exercise a general supervision over them. The study of Latin was indeed a primary necessity, for University teaching was almost entirely conducted in that language. These pedagogues had to prove their competence to the satisfaction of the University authorities, and on doing so received an attesting certificate, and a new birch as an emblem of their office. With this new birch they formally flogged in the open schools, a boy who lent his services for the occasion at a groat for solatium.

Some of the boys boarded with the grammar-master, others in the common lodging-houses of the town. They lived and were taught in crowded and fetid-smelling rooms, they were sometimes ill-fed and ill-clothed, and often cruelly ill-treated; but they took all these things lightly, as youth will, and passed no doubt as happy a boyhood, and turned out as wholesome Englishmen afterwards, as any pampered preparatory-school child of to-day.

After his preliminary study of grammar was over, the youth informed one of the many Masters of Arts teaching at Oxford that he wished to attend his lectures, and thus became a member of the University without any formal matriculation. If he was fortunate enough to gain admission to a college, so much the better; if he was not, he took up his abode in a Hall, for the statutes of 1420 and 1432 had made residence in some authorized Hall or college compulsory, and abolished that *mauvais sujet* the 'chamberdekyn,' or unattached student.

The 'Hall' was a large house, generally rented, but sometimes owned, by the Principal. Only graduates could be Principals; they were licensed by the University, and exercised a much stricter supervision over their students than had been the case a

century or two earlier. The office was one of some profit, though the food was not allowed to be supplied by the Principal, but was ordered entirely by a head-servant called the manciple. The inmates of a Hall took all their meals in common; towards the general expenses they contributed from eightpence to eighteenpence a week, and this payment was called 'commons.' If they wanted to supplement the Hall fare, they could get special supplies, but these were charged extra as 'battels.' Lectures began soon after daybreak, and dinner was taken at noon, or even earlier. There were several beds in each bedroom, and few students had beds to themselves, save in the colleges, and not always there; sometimes they slept three and four together. Fires were practically unknown except in the dining-hall. The only furniture consisted of tables, beds, and benches, and these all of the roughest; the students brought their own bedding. Books were rarities only possessed by the richer students, who not unfrequently deposited them as security for loans obtained from the University chests.

After the congregation house was built on the north side of St. Mary's, and the University had thus become definite owners of a part of the church, they used Cobham's building as a treasury, and transferred thither the little money and plate which they possessed. These treasures had previously been deposited for safe keeping in the Church of St. Frideswide. The 'University funds' had originated in fines paid by the town after uproars and assaults, and it was Grostête who had first ordered that this money should be stored in a chest at St. Frideswide. This chest grew in time into four, and in them were placed such plate as the University then owned, including a silver-gilt processional cross, part of the penalty paid by the Jews for an aggravated assault. Besides the four University chests proper, benefactors gave many others containing funds for the use of poor scholars, and each chest was commonly known by the name of the donor. These funds were lent to such poor scholars as needed them. No interest was charged, but each borrower before he was given the money had to deposit some pledge whose value should exceed that of the loan. The value of the pledge deposited had to be sworn to, by the four stationers of the University, and the pledges were ordinarily manuscripts, and more rarely pieces of plate. Borrowing from the University chest was originally limited to scholars whose income did not exceed 2 marks, and the highest sums to be lent were 13s. 4d. to a Master, 8s. to a Bachelor, and 5s. to a sophister.* The expenses of a well-to-do student averaged, per-

* See Maxwell Lyte, pp. 40, 68, 102.

haps, £10 to £15 per annum. The life in the colleges, though it resembled in the main that of the Halls, was more comfortable, as has been already pointed out.

'The academical year was divided into four terms. The first began on the 10th of October and ended on the 17th of December; the second began on January 14, and ended on the vigil of Palm Sunday; the third lasted from the second Wednesday after Easter till the Thursday before Whit-Sunday; and the fourth from the Wednesday before Trinity Sunday to an indeterminate day not earlier than July 8th. For most purposes these two summer terms were reckoned as one, and the interval between them was styled the Short Vacation in contradistinction to the Long Vacation, which lasted nearly three months.'*

Residence, study, and teaching were very general during vacation, and the monotony of work was varied in term-time by endless saints' days which entailed holidays for their proper celebration.

The subjects of study for the B.A. degree were the seven 'liberal arts' (which represented the old *Trivium* of grammar, rhetoric and logic, together with the *Quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy), and the 'three philosophies,' natural, moral, and metaphysical.

The books in which each subject was to be studied are categorically rehearsed in the statute of 1431; Vergil, Cicero, Livy, and the commonplaces of Latinity were of course included. Boethius, Priscian, Donatus, and Euclid were among the number of important authors; but the keystone and centre of the whole structure of medieval study was Aristotle, through the medium of Latin translations, and in his works was found the last court of appeal for logic, rhetoric or the 'three philosophies.' It would be tedious to pursue the subject further, and it will readily be believed that much of the University curriculum seems to modern eyes little better than a farrago of nonsense. It is useful to remember that Greek was unknown, and that the whole system of teaching and examination was carried on orally for the very sufficient reason that books were rare and of prohibitive cost.

Useful or useless as we may esteem the knowledge then to be had in Oxford, great care, and more time than is now the case, was given to its acquirement.

The statute of 1431 provides that a candidate for the M.A. degree should have studied the liberal arts and three philosophies for seven years, or eight if he had undergone 'determination.' After taking the M.A. degree, he was bound to remain at Oxford

* Maxwell Lyte, 'University of Oxford,' p. 228.

as a teacher for two years more. Thus, the Master's degree postulated a minimum of ten years spent in learning or teaching, and this period was in many cases considerably extended.

A minor ordeal, known then as now by the name of Responsions, was undergone a year after residence had commenced. Then followed periodic testings of the student's progress, called Collections, of which fee-paying was a distinguished feature. If all went well, the Bachelor's degree was taken within six years from admission as a scholar. There seems to have been no 'plucking' in the case; success was merely a question of observing the formalities, and of proving that the regulation-time had been passed in study. Propriety of behaviour and morals during the period, had also to be established by credible witnesses. This taking of the Bachelor's degree was attended with various ceremonies called 'Determination,'* but an exact description of them is not easy, and has at the best only an antiquarian interest. Determination took place in Lent, and the constituting Act was accomplished publicly before an M.A. in one of the Cat Street schools. It is said that the title of 'Determination' was derived from the fact of the candidate hearing disputants argue before him on scholastic questions, and 'determining' which was in the right. The expenses involved in taking the B.A. degree were considerable. It is true that the University was far less exacting then than now in her claims, and demanded only half a week's commons as a fee, but the 'incidental' expenses were very heavy. Friends and poor scholars were feasted indiscriminately, robes were given to clergy and officials, wine flowed like water, and the drinking-bouts were not unfrequently followed by brawls. Various efforts were made to curtail the reckless waste and expense by statute, but apparently without success. It became a point of personal pique and bravado to be as free-handed as possible on the occasion, and students who were themselves too poor to support such expenses, were allowed to find richer substitutes, who for the honour and glory of the thing should 'determine' for them.

Most students found the glories of the Baccalaureate sufficient, but a 'determinant' who wished to proceed to the Master's degree had to undergo a further period of three years' probation. This he spent in various studies, among which was included attendance at those public disputations of Bachelors, known as 'Austins.'†

* Determination is discussed in Maxwell Lyte's 'History of the University of Oxford,' pp. 206-210; Boase's 'Register of the University of Oxford,' Preface; Brodrick's 'History of the University of Oxford,' p. 63.

† From the old schools of the Augustinian Friars. See *ante*, p. 88.

At the end of this period he presented himself before Chancellor and Proctors at a special meeting of the Faculty of Arts, and produced fourteen Regent Masters as sponsors to speak as to his knowledge and morality. He swore upon the Bible all kinds of strange oaths—that he would observe all rights, customs, and privileges of the University; that he would discountenance all dissensions, brawling, and riots, especially those between North and South Country students; that he would not spend more than a certain sum on the celebration of his degree; that he would wear the robe properly pertaining to his degree; that he would abjure and condemn Lollardy; that he would recognise no Universities save Oxford and Cambridge, and would not lecture at Stamford; that he would never degrade himself by reassuming a Bachelor degree; and, finally, that he would never consent to 'the Reconciliation of Henry Symeon.'*

The anathema which ends the strange catalogue has never been authoritatively explained. Henry Symeon is said indeed to have been an Oxford Master, who forgot his dignity and pretended not to be an Oxford man at all, in order to enter a monastery into which graduates were not admitted. But be this as it may, his memory was formally objurgated by all candidates for the Master's degree till the commencement of the present century.

The degree once taken, and the necessary amount of feasting, robe-giving, and other ruinously expensive usages having been performed, the new M.A. 'incepted.'

The ceremony of inception was performed in St. Mary's Church, and consisted in the inceptor hearing a formal disputation and pronouncing his opinion on the question. He must satisfy the Chancellor that he had secured a room or school for teaching, and must afterwards lecture in it for the next two years. This two years' teaching was obligatory, and its exercise constituted the lecturer a 'Regent' Master. The regulation fees for his scholars were one shilling a year for logic, and eighteenpence for natural science.

The degree of Doctor in the three great faculties of theology, canon law, and civil law could only be obtained after graduating first in arts, and involved long and painful study after inception. To take the degree of Doctor of Theology, a man must have spent first and last some twenty years in the Oxford schools. There was a smaller faculty of medicine, which was mostly in a struggling condition; a faculty of rhetoric seems to have had a more or less illusory existence, and with the beginning of the sixteenth century musical degrees were first given.

* 'De gradu Henrici Simeonis.'

The material resources of the University were considerably strengthened in the fifteenth century by the building of the Divinity School, and by the establishment of a public library.

In early days teaching had been carried on promiscuously all over the town. Masters had lectured in any handy room that they could hire. In process of time however teachers, like other craftsmen, had gravitated to a special locality, and a certain street or lane running from the west end of St. Mary's to the site of the present Sheldonian became the fashionable teaching quarter. This lane was known as School Street, and there were in it at the beginning of the fifteenth century, according to Wood, some thirty-two 'schools,' or small houses, containing what we should call 'lecture-rooms.' Members of the University hired them for teaching purposes, and for inception ceremonials, and they belonged partly to private owners and partly to St. Frideswide's, Osney, and the other Oxford monasteries. Abbot Hooknorton, of Osney, rebuilt fourteen of them in 1439, but his design was much criticised as being barn-like and featureless. About the year 1427 it was decided to group the schools of divinity, the greatest of the faculties, into an important central building; and a site for the purpose was obtained at the north end of School Street. There were endless lets and hindrances which delayed the project, and the building begun in 1430 was not completed till fifty years later, in 1480. Finance was a weak point, and contributions were solicited all round from old Oxonians and the conventual bodies. Lord Lovell, of Minster Lovell, gave timber from his woods on the Windrush, and Rede of Boarstall stone from the Headington quarries. A legacy from Cardinal Beaufort came to the rescue in 1447, and finally Thomas Kemp, Bishop of London, contributed a magnificent donation. The work was twice delayed by the masons being taken away for Edward IV.'s new chapel of St. George at Windsor, and again under royal mandate for Wayn-flete's buildings at Magdalen. At last (in 1480) the theology exercises were moved from St. Mary's to the new schools. It had been intended originally to make the school of one story only, but on Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, the uncle of Henry VI., giving his great present of books to the University, the plan was changed, and an upper story added to hold the library. The building still remains, though now shut in between the great eastern block that Bodley added in 1612, and the western built for the Convocation House and Selden's books in 1636. Space will not permit us to speak here of the 'Good' Duke Humphrey, renowned alike in the fields of religion, learning, and love. To tell the tenth part of his exquisite learning or of his

amours, would fill a volume, but he well deserves the remembrance which is still made of him in the bidding prayer at St. Mary's. His first gift of books to the University was of 129 manuscripts, and before he died, in 1447, he supplemented them by many more, giving perhaps in all as many as 450 or 500. The University library was then moved from the chamber over the old congregation house on the north side of St. Mary's Church to this new building; and the old library* that Cobham planned, and Adam de Brome carried out, fell into desuetude.

* A legal document in the possession of Oriel College gives some interesting regulations as to the management of the old library. Two chaplains of Oriel were bound to keep the chamber open for a certain time before and after dinner, and to see that no one who came to read had damp clothes, or pen, ink, or knife.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THERE is little of importance to record either with respect to the University or the county during the reign of Edward IV. 'The Wars of the Roses, in which feudalism perished by its own hand, left few traces on the national life, and hardly disturbed the academical repose.'*

Edward IV. himself used Woodstock as an occasional residence, and was often at Langley in Wychwood Forest, for the purpose of hunting. But it is probable that nothing now remains of the Langley Lodge that housed him, for Henry VII. rebuilt the place. His initial 'H' may be seen to-day in more than one of the rooms linked in a true-lovers' knot with the 'E' of Elizabeth his Queen.† It is said that in the glades of Wychwood Forest Edward first saw Elizabeth Woodville. The King was hunting, and the beautiful woman flung herself at his feet with entreaties that he would restore her children's heritage. So runs the story, and one can well imagine such a scene taking place in some of those wild woodland glades of ancient timber, which still remain in isolated beauty at Fairspear and other points in the old forest domain. Others, who have not the glory of Oxfordshire at heart, will have it that the first meeting took place in Whittlebury, not Wychwood, Forest.

Edward IV. visited Oxford in state in September, 1481. He was with the Court at Woodstock, and Bishop Waynflete went thither and persuaded him to inspect the new buildings of Magdalen, which were then nearing completion. Edward agreed forthwith, and came into Oxford a little after sunset on the Satur-

* Brodrick, 'History of the University of Oxford,' p. 68.

† These initials are of florid ornamentation, and are carved out of freestone in bold relief.

day evening. The University officials and a great crowd of people with torches (*multitudine luminum*) went out to meet the King at the North Gate, and the proctors' accounts have entries for an outlay on holy rose-water* and the hire of torches on the occasion. The King and all his courtiers found quarters at Magdalen for the Saturday night, and made the round of the new buildings on Sunday morning, returning at mid-day to Woodstock.

Only two years later Waynflete came again to Magdalen to receive another royal visitor, but the scenes were changed. Edward IV. had passed away, and it was Richard III. who was making a roundabout progress from London to York. He reached Oxford on July 22, 1483, and was lodged with his suite at Magdalen. On the 25th and 26th the feasts of St. James and St. Anne, he was entertained with formal disputations, with which he professed himself much gratified, and rewarded the disputants with a present of a buck apiece and with other gratuities. One of those who argued before the King on divinity was William Grocyn, afterwards famous as the Grecian and Renaissancist. Richard was anxious enough to make friends all round; he gave venison and wine for a general feast, made a speech in which he expressed his desire to uphold the academy of Oxford, confirmed all its privileges and immunities, and was rewarded with one of those servile votes of thanks in the preparation of which the University were adepts.

Two years later Richard perished on the field of Bosworth, 1485; and in 1487 the last hope of the Yorkists was extinguished at Stoke, in the rout of those who had rallied round the Pretender, Lambert Simnel. With their falling fortunes were involved those of a great Oxfordshire family. An air of romance surrounds the very name of Lovel. The family had settled in the county as early as 1107, and built a mansion by the side of the Windrush, about three miles north of Witney. Maud Lovel founded a priory in the same place about 1200, and made it over to the famous Norman Abbey of Ivry. This foundation (which gave the name of *Minster* Lovel to the place) shared the fate of other alien priories, and was dissolved in 1415. Then William, Lord Lovel,† built (1420-30) a splendid manor-house, possibly embodying some of the old priory buildings, and a parish church close to it. An alabaster altar-tomb to his memory is still to be seen in the church, on which his effigy lies in armour, with shields of his alliances

* Quoted by Maxwell Lyte, 'History of the University of Oxford,' p. 331.

† His son John, Lord Lovel, gave timber for the construction of the new Divinity School at Oxford.

painted below in gold and colours. It was his grandson, Francis Viscount Lovel, who fought and lost at Stoke.

> 'The Cat,* the Rat, and Lovel the dog,
> Ruled all England under the Hog,'

ran a scurrilous rhyme, and Francis Lovel had made himself peculiarly obnoxious because, though a Lancastrian, he played turncoat and took office under Richard III. On Henry VII.'s accession he was attainted, but escaped to the Low Countries and returned to fight at Stoke. After the battle he was never seen again. Some said he fell on the field; others, that he had been seen trying to swim his horse across the Trent and had never reached the other bank. But tradition tells the more romantic tale that he made his way back to his home by the Windrush, and hid in a vaulted chamber, of which only an old housekeeper knew the entrance. There she fed him for months till death called her away suddenly with her secret untold, and the doomed man was left to starve, locked in his unknown retreat.

'On the 6th of May, 1728, the present Duke of Rutland related in my hearing, that about twenty years before, viz., in 1708, upon occasion of new laying a chimney at Minster Lovel, there was discovered a large vault underground, in which was the entire skeleton of a man, as having been sitting at a table which was before him with a book, paper, pen, etc. In another part of the room lay a cap, all much mouldered and decayed, which the family and others judged to be the Lord Lovel whose exit has hitherto been so uncertain.'†

The great house was not dismantled till the middle of the eighteenth century, and its ruins, with the exquisite Perpendicular church close by, the grove of trees, the Windrush, and the old pointed bridge that crosses it, form to-day one of the most beautiful groups of Oxfordshire scenery.

Minster Lovel was not the only house of importance that the fifteenth century saw raised in the county. In the south, at Ewelme, near Wallingford, the Duke of Suffolk was building (1430-40) a Manor Place 'of brick and Tymbre and set within a fayre mote,' a church, an almshouse, and a school, all in a ring fence. He had come into possession of the Ewelme estate through Alice Chaucer (a kinswoman of the poet),‡ and 'for love of her and the commoditie of her landes fell much to dwell in Oxford-

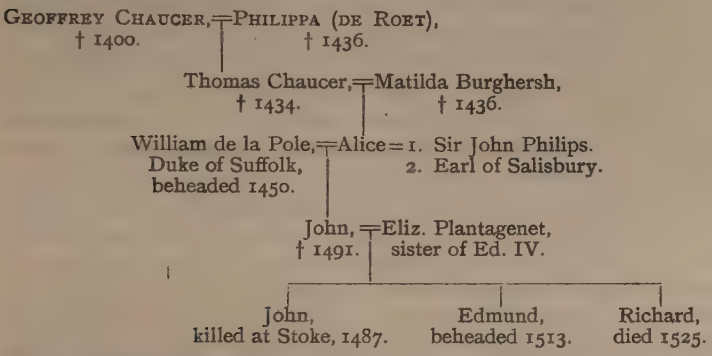
* The Cat, Catesby; the Rat, Ratcliffe; the Hog, Richard III.

† Memorandum, August 9, 1737, by William Cowper, Clerk of Parliament.

‡ For Sir Thomas Chaucer, see *ante*, p. 112. Alice, his daughter and heiress, married (1) Sir John Philips; (2) Thomas de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury;

shire.' William de la Pole's (first Duke of Suffolk) death is only one instance of the *Ate* that dogged the Suffolk family relentlessly. The tragic story is well known. In 1449, during an interlude of Yorkist power, he was attainted of treason; and, though his royal master, Henry VI., did his best to shield the favoured Minister, was condemned to banishment. As he sailed for France his boat was boarded by a royal vessel, and he met his death at the hands of the angry sailors.*

(3) William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, whom she survived. The outline pedigree is as follows:


Geoffrey Chaucer, † 1400.
Philippa (de Roet), † 1436.
Thomas Chaucer, † 1434.
Matilda Burghersh, † 1436.
William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, beheaded 1450.
Alice = 1. Sir John Philips. 2. Earl of Salisbury.
John, † 1491.
Eliz. Plantagenet, sister of Ed. IV.
John, killed at Stoke, 1487.
Edmund, beheaded 1513.
Richard, died 1525.

* In the Paston letters (William Lomner to John Paston, May 5, 1450) is a curious account of the Duke of Suffolk's death.

'*To my ryght worchipfull John Paston at Norwich.*

'Ryght worchipfull Sir, I recomaunde me to yow, and am right sory of that I shall seye, and have soo wesshe [washed] this litel bille with sorwfulle terys [tears] that on ethes [with difficulty] ye shalle reede it.

'As on Monday [May 4] nexte after May day there come tydyngs to London that on Thorsday [April 30] before, the Duke of Suffolk come unto the costes of Kent full near Dower with his ij shepes and a litel spynner; the qweche spynner he sent with certeyn letters to certeyn of his trusted men unto Caleys Warde to knowe how he shuld be rescevyd; and with him mette a shippe callyd Nicholas of the Towre, with other shippis waytyng on hym; and by hem that were in the spyner the Maister of the Nicholas hadde knowlich of the Duke's comyng. And when he espyed the duke's shepis he sent forthe his bote to wete what they were, and the Duke hymselfe spakke to hem and seyd, he was be the Kyngs comaundement sent to Caleys Ward, &c.

'And they seyd he most speke with there master. And soo he with ij or iij of his men wente forth with hem yn here bote to the Nicolas; and whanne he come the master badde hym, "Welcom, Traitor" as men sey, and forther the maister desyryd to wete yf the shepmen wolde holde with the duke, and they sent word they wold not yn noo wyse; and soo he was yn the Nicolas tyl Saturday [May 2] next folwyng.

'Soom sey he wrotte moche thenke [things] to be delivered to the Kynge, but thet is not verily knowe. He hed hys confessor with hym, &c.

'And some sey he was arreyned yn ye sheppe on here maner, upon the appechements and fonde gylty, &c.

'Also he asked the name of the sheppe and whanne he knew it, he remem-

The Duchess Alice survived him for a quarter of a century, passing her days in kindly piety at Ewelme. Her monument of alabaster in the church is one of the finest in England. It is charged with numerous coats of arms; gold-winged angels bear up on a cushion the head of the sleeping Duchess, and on her left arm is seen the Garter, an extraordinary rarity as worn by female figures.

Ewelme itself is a pretty village, with a row of cottages half a mile long, which have before their doors a sparkling stream dammed here and there into watercress-beds. At the top of the street, on a steep knoll, stand church, school, and almshouses of mellowest fifteenth-century brick, as beautiful and structurally sound as the pious founders left them. The Manor Place or Palace of Ewelme, with its park and moat, has utterly passed away, though in the seventeenth century it was in sufficient repair to give quarters to Prince Rupert in the early days of the Civil War.

Besides Minster Lovel and Ewelme, the Harcourts built a great palace at Stanton Harcourt about the middle of the fifteenth century. They became Lords of Stanton in the time of Henry I. through the marriage of Richard de Harcourt with Isabel de Camville of Middleton, for that property then formed part of the barony of De Camville. It is a remarkable fact, indeed, that after an occupation of 750 years the land still remains in their hands, although the family seat is now elsewhere. The magnificent house of Stanton was probably built about 1450, and fell into disuse at the close of the seventeenth century. In 1711 the Harcourts removed to Nuneham Courtenay, and about 1780 Stanton Harcourt was pulled down. Some portions, however, were left standing, and form to-day the object of many a delightful ramble from Oxford. There is the gatehouse; the great kitchen, on the lordly scale of Glastonbury, Christchurch and Durham; and a tower, with a chapel on one of its floors (Pope's Tower, it is called, and the top room is Pope's Study). There is a

bred Stacy that seid if he myght eschape the daunger of the Towr he should be saffe; and thanne his herte faylyd hym for he thowghte he was desservyd, and yn ye syght of all his men he was drawyn ought of the grete shippe yn to the bote; and there was an exe and a stoke and oon of the lewdeste of the shippe badde hym ley down his hedde, and he should be fair ferd wyth and dye on a swerd; and he took a rusty swerd and smotte of his hedde withyn halfe a doseyn strokes and toke away his gown of russet and his dobelette of velvet mayled and leyde his body on the Sonds by Dover: and some sey his hedde was sette on a pole by it, and his men sette on the londe be grette circumstaunce and preye. And the shreve of Kent doth weche the body, and sent his under shreve to the juges to wete what to doo, and also to the Kenge whatte shalbe doo, &c.'

window-pane of this room still preserved, on which is scratched, 'In the year 1718 Alexander Pope finished here the 5th volume of Homer;' and from Stanton he wrote many facetious letters. The place had begun to go to ruin in his time. The very rats, he says, are gray, and 'pray the roof may not fall on them, for they are too infirm to seek other lodgings.' The great kitchen is the 'Forge of Vulcan, the Cave of Polypheme, the Temple of Moloch.' The country people tell him that the witches keep their Sabbath there, and that once a year the Devil treats them to a toasted tiger stuffed with tenpenny nails. Gay was stopping about the same time at Cokethorpe, a neighbouring house of the Harcourts, and the two poets often foregathered at Stanton.

The fifteenth century saw three new colleges founded in Oxford. Lincoln dates from 1429, All Souls from 1442, and Magdalen from 1458.

Lincoln was founded by Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, in 1429. He had originally been led away by Wycliffite teaching, but afterwards, becoming convinced of its errors, founded Lincoln as a counterblast to such doctrines. It was to be 'a little college of true students in theology, who would defend the mysteries of the sacred page against those ignorant laics who profaned with swinish snouts its most holy pearls.' Lincoln was originally semi-monastic, and rather a hostel for theologians than a college; it does not seem to have assumed the latter character till the Dissolution.

The college was to be built mainly on the site of St. Mildred's Church* and Churchyard; and All Saints' and St. Michael's parishes were to be dissolved to give it endowment. Fleming died in January, $143\frac{0}{1}$, before much was done towards the establishment of the place, and his orphaned college fell into grievous straits for lack of adequate endowment. But about 1470 Thomas Rotheram, another Bishop of Lincoln, was in Oxford making a diocesan visitation. Parkinson, Sub-rector of Lincoln College, preached before him, and, enlarging on the text, 'Behold and visit this vine,' he drew so moving a picture of the sad plight of the college that Rotherham rose in his seat and promised his help. His promise was so nobly carried out that he became the second founder of the college, and the memory of that so moving text has ever since been kept alive by vines planted and flourishing in the chapel quadrangle.

All Souls was founded by Henry Chichele, the old Archbishop

* The little parish of St. Mildred had no population other than students, and the church itself was in very bad repair.

of Canterbury.* He was the son of a merchant of Higham Ferrars, and left in that little town memorials of his munificence. In history he is known as a stanch Papalist, and an extreme advocate of English claims to the French crown. It was in the darkest days of the French wars, when the great Duke of Bedford was dead and Paris fallen to the French, that he conceived the plan of founding an Oxford house of education, which should be also a great chantry where prayer should constantly be said for the souls of all faithful departed. It is likely enough that the loss of so many of the noblest of England's lives on the fields of France weighed heavily upon him; at any rate, in the charter given by Henry VI. (whom Chichele made co-founder) it is ordained that prayer shall be made 'not only for Our welfare and that of Our godfather the Archbishop while alive, and for Our Souls when we shall have gone from this light, but also for the Souls of the most illustrious Prince Henry late King of England, of Thomas late Duke of Clarence Our uncle, of the Dukes, Earls, Barons, Knights, Esquires and other noble subjects of Our father and Ourself who fell in the wars for the Crown of France, as also for the Souls of all the faithful departed.'

Chichele was one of the first scholars nominated by William of Wykeham at New College, and he had Wykeham's foundation in mind when he built All Souls, though it was all on a smaller scale, except the great chapel, with its splendid reredos, of which mention will be made later.

Magdalen was founded by William Waynflete, who was perhaps educated at Winchester and New College, and was successively Master of Winchester College, Master of Henry VI.'s new foundation at Eton, and Bishop of Winchester. His name was originally Patten, and he probably changed it to Waynflete on his ordination, assuming the name of his birthplace on the Lincolnshire coast. He first founded a Hall in Oxford in 1448, and, on becoming Chancellor in 1456, determined to improve on his first intention, and change his Hall to a College. The political changes of the time and the difficulties of steering a safe course in such troubled waters hindered the carrying out of Waynflete's plan, and though the foundation-stone of the chapel was laid in 1474, it was not till 1480 that the building was completed, and the society was not formally organized till 1482. The tower was begun in 1492, and finished in 1507, but Waynflete died in 1486.

Magdalen from the first basked in the sunshine of royal favour.

* He had been Primate for twenty-three years, and was seventy-three years old when he first seriously took in hand the foundation of All Souls.

It was visited, as has been mentioned, by Edward IV. in 1481 and by Richard III. in 1483. After the founder's death, Henry VII. was there in 1488, and his memory is popularly connected with a Latin hymn which is sung every year by the choir at sunrise on the top of the tower.*

Magdalen appears to have soon fallen into serious disorder, and in January, $150\frac{6}{7}$, a visitation of the college was held by the commissary of the Bishop of Winchester. There were evidently bitter personal animosities among the Fellows, with tale-bearing, slander, and backbiting. Most of the 'crimes' alleged are petty enough. Some of the Fellows are accused of keeping harriers, ferrets, sparrow-hawks, and weasels. Others went on the land of the Abbot of Dorchester stealing rabbits, and in Woodstock Park snaring game. Card-playing inside and outside the college was freely alleged. Some Fellows stayed out all night hunting; others frequented an inn of bad repute, called the Tabard, and even went so far as to 'cook eggs there in the middle of the night.' Latin was not spoken, and some Fellows, instead of wearing clothes 'befitting ecclesiastical persons and sewn in front,' walked in the town in lay dress with open courtier sleeves, in all the frivolity of 'mantles and liripips.' The Vice-President was most actively assailed, and he was repeatedly accused of having baptized a cat at his home at Colyweston, and of resorting to illicit conjuring for the discovery of treasure. It is a trivial list, and little seems to have come of the Commission. The chief actors compurgated

* Neither the benefactions of Henry VIII. nor his commemoration (which actually is made each 1st of May in the chapel) have any connection with the custom of singing a Latin hymn on the tower at sunrise on May Day. Two accounts of the origin of this custom, which allege such a connection, have often been repeated, and sometimes confused: (1) That Mass was formerly said at an early hour on May 1, upon the top of the tower, for King Henry VII., and that the hymn is a survival from this service. (2) That the sum paid by the rectory of Slymbridge (given to the college by Henry VII.) was intended for the maintenance of the custom of singing on the tower. Of the first of these accounts it may be said that there is no evidence of the celebration of Mass on the tower (a thing, *à priori*, highly improbable) at any time; and that the hymn, which now forms part of the college 'grace,' is probably a compilation of the seventeenth century, and is certainly not part of the Requiem Mass according to the Rite of Sarum or any other rite. Of the second account, it may be said that the deeds relating to Slymbridge show clearly that the payment was not intended for this purpose, to which it was never applied. The present custom of singing the hymn from the 'grace' originated, it is believed, in the last century, on an occasion when the former custom of performing secular music on the tower was interrupted by bad weather. The hymn was probably chosen as a substitute because the choir was perfectly familiar with its words and music. The details of the ceremony as it is at present performed were arranged about fifty years ago (Clark, 'Colleges of Oxford,' p. 239).

There are other instances of tower-singing, *e.g.*, Durham Cathedral, where the choir sing on the top of the great tower every 29th of May.

themselves, and were admonished to do better in future (Macray, 'Register of Magdalen College,' New Series, vol. i., p. 35 *et seq.*).

At the beginning of the fifteenth century there was to be found in Italy a culture infinitely superior to any on the other side of the Alps. The revolt against scholasticism and against the whole medieval system had begun; a spirit of critical inquiry was abroad that culminated in the movement called the Renaissance. To that movement an additional impetus was given in the middle of the century by the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the dispersal of Greek scholars and classical manuscripts which followed.

The ripples of the great revival of classical learning did not, however, reach England, and Oxford the then intellectual capital of England, till the end of the century. Cornelio Vitelli, an Italian, is the first person recorded as teaching Greek in Oxford. The exact date of his arrival in the University is not known: it may have been about 1480. From him William Grocyn (who has already been mentioned as taking part in an exhibition dispute on divinity before Richard III.*) acquired the rudiments of the language, and afterwards went to Italy to perfect his knowledge. There were then lecturing on the Greek classics at Florence Politian and Demetrius Chalcondylas, and more than one famous Oxford student travelled thither to sit at their feet. William Grocyn was one of the first, and soon afterwards followed a still more famous Oxford man, Thomas Linacre. Linacre was a Fellow of All Souls, a man of enormous and most varied culture. It was a matter of dispute during his lifetime whether his classical or his scientific attainments were the most noteworthy, but posterity has decided that he is to be remembered as a great physician. He became Professor of Medicine at Parma, was first President of the College of Physicians after his return to England, and left legacies to endow two physiology readerships at Merton, which have since been merged in the Linacre Professorship of Anatomy. He was devoted to the classics, and brought back with him from Italy a great store of Greek books. He was appointed doctor and tutor to Prince Arthur,† and dedicated to him his first book, a translation of the 'Sphere' of Proclus, which Aldus printed at Venice. It was in another translation of Linacre's (the 'De Temperamentis' of Galen) that Greek characters were first printed in England. This book was published at Cambridge in 1521.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century there was a meteor-like appearance of an Oxford Press. Whence it came or why

* P. 131. † Henry VIII.'s elder brother.

its existence was so brief is unknown. There is a little octavo volume of eighty-four pages—an exposition of the Apostles' Creed by St. Jerome*—which was published at Oxford, and bears the date MCCCCLXVIII in its colophon. If that date were correct, Oxford would be able to claim the first use of movable type in England, for 1468 is earlier by nine years than the date of Caxton's first book† printed in England. But unfortunately the date has been impugned, and it is contended that an x has been left out by accident, and that the real date should be 1478, not 1468. The subject is ably discussed in Mr. Falconer Madan's 'Early Oxford Press,' 1895, though it is improbable that the last word has yet been said. Authorities on the whole are against the genuineness of the 1468 date; but those who chose to maintain it, and to uphold Oxford's claim to the first printing-press in England, may well fling the burden of disproof on the objectors' shoulders, and the disproof is very far indeed from convincing.

Whether the date be 1468 or 1478, another Oxford book (the Nicomachean 'Ethics' of Aristotle, by Leonardus Arretinus) was published in 1479, and then thirteen more between that date and 1486. In 1486 the press suddenly came to an end, and nothing more seems to have been printed at Oxford till Walter Burley's commentary on the 'Posterior Analytics' of Aristotle in 1517. The books of the early Oxford Press are divisible into three groups (1468-$14\frac{79}{80}$, three books; 1480-1482, four books; and 1483-$148\frac{6}{7}$, eight books). The printer of the first three is not known; the printer of the second four seems to have been one Theodoric Rood, and the printers of the last eight Theodoric Rood and Thomas Hunte in partnership. It is probable that the type of the first group came from Cologne, and the '1468' book was printed one page at a time. Theodoric Rood came also from Cologne, and describes himself as 'Theodericus Rood de Colonia in Alma Universitate Oxon.' Thomas Hunte was probably the same as one Thomas Hunte who was 'Universitatis Oxoniæ Stacionarius,' and lived between 1477 and 1479 in Haberdasher Hall, in the parish of St. Mary the Virgin at Oxford.

In $148\frac{6}{7}$ the printing press‡ at Oxford stopped work, so far as is

* Exposicio sancti Ieronimi in Simbolum apostolorum ad papam laurentium, but really by Tyrannius Rufinus of Aquileia. The colophon runs: Explicit exposicio Sancti Ieronimi in simbolo apostolorum ad papam laurencium impressa Oxonie et finita Anno Domini M.cccc.lxviij. xvij die decembris.

† 'The Dictes and Wise Sayings of the Philosophers,' 1477, is said to be Caxton's first book printed in England, the place of printing the 'Game and Playe of Chesse,' 1474, being uncertain.

‡ The list of the fifteen early Oxford Press books, as known at present, is given by Mr. Falconer Madan as follows:

at present known; but it is, of course, always possible that some Oxford-printed book may be discovered to bridge the gulf between that date and 1517.

It may be well to add a few words as to the progress and later development of Oxford printing.

In 1518 John Scolar, and in 1519 his successor, Charles Kyeforth, were printing at Oxford, 'in vico sancti Johannis Baptistæ,' which is possibly St. John's Street by Merton College.

The Earl of Leicester, while Chancellor of the University, erected a new press at his own expense, and at his instigation Joseph Barnes was appointed 'printer to the University.' The first work of this press, a Latin commentary on Aristotle's 'Ethics,' was issued in 1585. Barnes held his office for more than thirty years, and turned out much valuable work. He was succeeded by John Lichfield and Thomas Short in 1617, and other Lichfields printed till the last quarter of the seventeenth century with the impress 'typis Lichfieldianis.'

The houses in which these early printers did their work are not known, but at the Restoration the Old Congregation House of St. Mary's Church was used as a printing-office. From 1669 printing was carried on upon the floor of the new Sheldonian Theatre, but this was inconvenient, because on occasion the space had to be cleared. At Commemoration and other grand functions the printing-presses were bundled into basement-rooms and the papers into a space above the ceiling.

In Queen Anne's reign the copyright of Earl Clarendon's 'History of the Rebellion' was presented to the University, and with the profits resulting from it the stately 'old' Clarendon Press building was erected by the side of the Sheldonian Theatre. To this building the whole of the plant was removed, and in

1468. Jerome's Exposition of the Apostles' Creed.
1479. Leonardus Brunus Arretinus: Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.
1480. Ægidius de Columna on Original Sin.
1480. Cicero de Milone, the first English-printed classic.
1481.? A fragment (two leaves) of a Latin Grammar.
1481. Commentary on the 'De Anima' of Aristotle, by Alexander de Hales.
1482. Latin Commentary on Lamentations of Jeremiah, by John Lathbury.
1483. Latin Grammar, believed to be by John Anwykyll.
1483. Hampole: Commentary on Burial Service.
1483.? Nineteen logical treatises.
1483.? Provincial Constitutions of England in Latin, with a Commentary by William Lyndewoode.
1483.? St. Augustine: Counsels of Alms-giving,
1485. A Latin translation of the spurious Epistles of Phalaris.
1485. Fragment (two leaves) of a grammatical work by Alexander.
1485. A Festial: with woodcuts, and printed 'the yere of our lord M.cccc.lxxxvi the day aftir Seint Edward the Kyng.'

October, 1713, printing was there begun. In 1830 the business had entirely outgrown the Broad Street buildings, and was transplanted to the present splendid printing-house, which in its turn is called the Clarendon Press.

From that date it is unnecessary to say more than that the history of the Clarendon Press has been one of continuous expansion and improvement. While the scholarly traditions of the oldest English printing-house have been zealously guarded, full advantage has been taken of modern inventions, and the place is now well in line with the greatest presses of the world. Much of this result must be attributed to the present Architypographus and Comptroller. Many know Mr. Horace Hart in the scrupulous accuracy and material beauty of the work which issues from his press; and the personnel of the establishment has increased in number from 278 at his appointment, in 1883, to near 600 at the present date. The establishment is divided into the 'Learned Press,' which prints in thirty languages, and the 'Bible Side.' Among the books which issue from the latter department are those famous Bibles and Prayer-Books on thin India paper and of incredibly small compass, which have hitherto defied all rivalry. The Clarendon Press, while it buys paper of other makers, consumes the whole of the paper made at the Wolvercote mills, at the far end of Port Meadow.

The last years of the fifteenth century saw Erasmus at Oxford, and about him were gathered the most illustrious group of scholars that the place has ever seen. Among them were Grocyn, Linacre, Colet, and Sir Thomas More. Erasmus, an ex-Augustinian himself, lodged in a house of Augustinian canons, called St. Mary's College, and has left in his letters numerous references to the brilliant and congenial society he there enjoyed.

It is remarkable enough that the great pioneers of classical learning in England should have been men of pure life and spotless reputation. Grocyn, Linacre, Colet, More, had all been at Florence, and had seen there the famous Italian Renaissancists reproducing in their lives, not only the polish, but also the vices of classical civilization. But these great Englishmen seem to have passed through the ordeal unscathed, and to have assimilated the refinement of paganism without any sacrifice of morality. And here it must remarked, even at the risk of an apparent introduction of irrelevant generalities, that the course and effect of the Renaissance was entirely different in Italy and England. In Italy it was pagan and antichristian, and its result there was to deal a blow not only to the Catholic Church, but to all religion, the effect of which has endured to the present day. In England,

on the other hand, there was little secular in the movement. The new learning was pressed at once into the service of theology, and resulted in a certain quickening of religious life. The dogmas of catholicity were at once questioned, and finally overthrown; but this did not mean an overthrow of religion, because a vigorous and blatant Protestantism took the place of the older faith. This difference of character was vastly in favour of England as compared with Italy, and yet was not without its grave drawbacks. To the senseless logic-chopping and scholastic inanities of the Middle Age succeeded the equally senseless and interminable wrangle between Catholics and Protestants. It is terrible to contemplate the loss of energy and life, the detestable cruelties, and the rancorous bitterness, which accompanied the struggles of these Christians.

It was probably 'a far-sighted appreciation of the anti-Catholic tendencies inherent in the Renaissance'* that produced a curious reaction against the study of Greek and the revival of classical learning in Oxford in the beginning of the sixteenth century. A number of members of the University organized a systematic opposition to the new teaching, calling themselves 'Trojans,' to mark their hostility to the Greeks, and assailing the new humanists with fiery diatribes, with sermons, with all sorts of obloquy, and sometimes with actual violence. This fanatic opposition was sufficiently important to demand firm repressive measures. Sir Thomas More wrote to the University authorities, saying that unless it was put an end to, the favour of Warham and Wolsey, the great patrons of Oxford, would be forfeited, and it is said that the interference of the King himself was eventually required to terminate the movement.

But, in spite of all 'Trojan' opposition, the new studies were making headway, and the year 1516 saw a fresh departure in the establishment of a Greek professorship. This professorship or lectureship formed part of the foundation of Bishop Fox's new College of Corpus Christi. Fox had been successively Bishop of Exeter, Bath and Wells, Durham, and Winchester; and it was not till old age that he determined to found a college at Oxford. At first it was to have been an Oxford house attached to the great monastery of St. Swithin at Winchester, as Durham College was attached to St. Cuthbert's Abbey of Durham, but a foresight of the impending Dissolution induced him to change his plan. 'What, my lord,' said Oldham, Bishop of Exeter, 'sha . we build houses and provide livelihoods for a company of bussing monks, whose end and fall we may ourselves live to see?' And so Fox

* Brodrick, 'University of Oxford,' p. 73.

founded a secular college; but he was careful to formulate his full faith in the old teaching by calling it Corpus Christi, and setting over the door a sculpture of a group of angels bearing in a monstrance the very Body of Christ.

But in the statutes of the new college are many indications of the change of ideas that the Renaissance was bringing about, and most important of them was the provision for three lecturers on the foundation, who were to teach Greek, Latin, and theology in lectures open to the University at large. Greek might be spoken in lieu of Latin in the Hall and elsewhere, and provision was made for the maintenance of a Fellow or promising scholar for a three years' course of study in Italy. Fox died in 1528, and at his college may still be seen his pastoral staff, chalice, and cup, all splendid specimens of medieval plate.

About the same time Brasenose was founded by William Smyth, Bishop of Lincoln, and Sir Richard Sutton, of Macclesfield. It was an amplification of old Brasenose Hall, which has been already mentioned. But its statutes, issued in 1521, show, curiously enough, no trace of Renaissance feeling. Like those of Corpus, they are extraordinarily minute, forbidding long hair, costly dress, dice, cards, ball games, dogs, hawks, ferrets, singing-birds, and musical instruments; imposing small fines for minor breaches of discipline, and more substantial penalties for personal violence, but calling here for no special remark. With Corpus and Brasenose the tale of twelve pre-Dissolution colleges is complete: All Souls, Balliol, Brasenose, Corpus, Exeter, Lincoln, Magdalen, Merton, New College, Oriel, Queen's, University.

It is worth noticing, too, that the whole of the choir and nave of St. Mary the Virgin's Church were rebuilt at the end of the fifteenth century, the Early Decorated thus giving place to the Perpendicular style. The choir is supposed to have been rebuilt 1462 by Walter Lyhert, Bishop of Norwich, and once Provost of Oriel, and the nave (1490-92) perhaps by Sir Reginald Bray.* Henry VII., who visited Oxford in 1488, made a grant of forty of the famous Shotover oaks in aid of the rebuilding, and the magnificent embroidered pall which he gave to cover the 'herse at his obits' is still preserved among the treasures of St. Mary's.

The sixteenth century, however bright were the prospects offered by the revival of learning, had not opened well for the University. Its numbers were dwindling, and it was certainly losing some of its old prestige. Many causes were at work to bring about this result. There was a general feeling of unrest and expectation that was very unfavourable to the quiet of

* *Vide* Jackson's 'Church of St. Mary,' quoted *ante*, p. 105.

academic study. The finding of America had turned men's minds to voyages of business and discovery; there was constant fighting abroad to allure adventurous spirits; the invention of printing and improvement of paper were multiplying books, and robbing the University of its monopoly as a great depository of manuscripts. The mutterings of the coming storm in religious matters were already making themselves heard, while the high-handed action of the Tudors roused a feeling of the insecurity of corporate property, and threatened the very existence of the colleges.

Among the influences which militated against the prosperity of the University at the beginning of the sixteenth century was the terrible unhealthiness of Oxford itself. Between 1500 and 1540 pestilence succeeded pestilence in quick succession. One outbreak was scarcely over before another began. The most dreaded visitation was that known as the 'sweating sickness' (*sudor Anglicus*), which seems to have been analogous to the yellow fever of the tropics. Of this there were exceptionally violent outbreaks: in 1506, 1517, 1528, and 1551. The 1528 attack, known as the 'Great Mortality,' was the worst, and the dismal monotony was varied by other epidemics, among them a filthy bubonic plague.

A tablet in the present Assize Courts relates that 'Near this spot stood the ancient Shire Hall, unhappily famous in History as the scene in July, 1577, of the Black Assize, where a malignant disease known as Gaol fever caused the death within 40 days of the Lord Chief Baron (Sir Robert Bell), the High Sheriff (Sir Robert D'Oyley) of Merton, and about three hundred more. The Malady, from the stench of the prisoners, developed itself during the trial of one Rowland Jenkes, a saucy, foul-mouthed bookseller, for scandalous words uttered against the Queen.'

At the time of plague outbreaks most of the students returned to their own homes, and even those who wished to continue study withdrew, as a rule, to some country estate belonging to their college. The 'college' at Witney, which belonged to Corpus, and the house at Garsington, which Sir William Pope built for his new foundation of Trinity, may be quoted as instances of buildings specially set apart as plague resorts. But as a rule, in time of grievous epidemic, some members of the college were deputed to go round the neighbouring villages and find suitable lodgings for the others, who followed when all was ready. Thus, Magdalen at various times resorted to Brackley, Burford, Ewelme, Thame, Wallingford, Water Eaton, and Witney. Durham College went to Handborough. All Souls, who were the owners of Stanton Harcourt Parsonage, compelled its tenants by a clause

in the lease to 'find four chambers in the house, furnished with bedding linen and woollen, for so many of the fellows as shall be sent to lodge there whenever any pestilence or other contagious disorder shall happen in the University.' Sometimes colleges went further afield, as Magdalen to Brailes, or Oriel to Dean. At times when infection was feared at Oxford fires were lighted to purify the air, and great bonfires blazing in front of the college gates or in the quadrangles were features of Oxford life as late as the middle of the eighteenth century. 'There are,' says Mr. Macray,* 'several entries in the accounts of Magdalen College of payments for coals burned in the cloister; six cartloads of fir-faggots were brought from Headington and elsewhere, and 400 bundles of wood from 18 trees which were cut down' (1534).

As the prestige and numbers of the University decreased, the prowess of the townsmen revived; there was a recrudescence of the town-and-gown feeling, which had proved such a curse in earlier times. For a century and a half the strife had lain dormant, under the practical supremacy of the University; but now the citizens began to lift up their heads again, to question the privileges of the scholars, and to assert their own. There were brawls in the streets, recalling the sanguinary riots of the fourteenth century, and hand-to-hand fights and homicide resulted more than once when the opposing factions met. The burghers refused the customary penance and homage to the University authorities on St. Scholastica's Day; they claimed the right to regulate trade, to set the patrols in the streets after dark, and other privileges which had for years been the unchallenged prerogative of the Chancellor. One of the Corporation Bailiffs (John Haynes) and William Fleming the Mayor seem to have made themselves particularly obnoxious, and Haynes added to his other misdemeanours by selling such bad Malmsey wine that no one could drink it.

In their difficulties the University appealed to the great Cardinal, Thomas Wolsey. William Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was Chancellor of Oxford University; he held that office from 1506 to 1532, long enough to see both Wolsey's rise and fall. He was consulted on many occasions by the University, and seems to have given them good enough advice; but his influence was altogether overshadowed at Oxford by that of Wolsey.

Wolsey had a great affection for Oxford. He had known it from early years, and had once been called the 'Boy Bachelor,'

* 'Register of Magdalen College, Oxford,' new series, vol. ii., p. 12. W. D. Macray, 1897.

because he took his first degree at fifteen years of age. Afterwards he was Bursar of Magdalen and Master of Waynflete's school; an unsupported tradition even attributes to him the design of Magdalen Tower.*

'The person who ruled both the King and the entire kingdom' ruled nowhere more completely than at Oxford. With the University his influence was paramount; he was their *fautor ac protector*, and no terms of adulation were too servile for them. There was at this time a desire to codify the University statutes. The statutes consisted of a vast mass of regulations formed in the course of centuries by a rule-of-thumb process, a special statute being made to meet each difficult case as it arose. These rules were numberless and of very various character, embracing as they did the utmost minutiæ of academic discipline. Sometimes they were entirely inconsistent with one another, and were generally of such complexity as to give rise to the objection that it was of little use that members of the University should swear to observe the statutes, for no one could find out what he had to observe. The University now placed these statutes entirely in Wolsey's hands. They begged him to cast them into code shape, to revise them so as to make them harmonious among themselves, and, in fine, to 'alter them in any way he chose.' Wolsey accepted the task, though it goes without saying that a man of his position and occupations never found time to carry it out; but that the University should give him a free hand to alter their statutes as he pleased shows to what a length their flattering confidence could be carried. And the result justified it, for Wolsey lost no opportunity of showing how near to his heart he had all Oxford interests.

It was by his aid that a stop was put to the growing differences between the town and University, and the refractory Corporation brought to a proper state of subjection. On his accession Henry VIII. had confirmed in a formal manner all the University privileges, but Wolsey obtained from him an important new charter of very extended scope. This charter secured to the University the entire management of the trade of the city; the Chancellor was to have a prison of his own; to have a right to try all cases in which a member of the University was concerned, no matter where they were brought; and against his decisions there was to be no appeal. It was this document, fortified with the Great Seal, that Wolsey sent down to Oxford in 1528 as a weapon for the University to crush their opponents. The citizens, on perusing it, were fain to admit themselves beaten. They

* See *ante*, p. 136.

made their submission and amend with what grace they might, and consoled themselves by muttering under their breath that 'many things passed the King's broad seal that the King's grace was not aware of.'

Wolsey, visiting Oxford in 1518, promised to establish new lectures in various subjects, but whether these lectureships were ever really founded is doubtful, in spite of the fact that Wood gives a list of them (theology, civil law, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, humanity, and rhetoric) and of the lecturers. One outcome, at any rate, of the Cardinal's intention was the advent of a very distinguished scholar to Oxford. Wolsey appointed Juan Luis Vives to fill the new Chair of Rhetoric, and the Spaniard arrived in Oxford in 1523. For five years he lectured in the University with much renown, and was, moreover, appointed tutor to the Princess Mary. But he fell foul with Henry VIII., over the question of the Spanish divorce, in which he naturally took Catherine's part, and so he left England in 1528. His reminiscences of Oxford were not agreeable. He complains of rowdy noises in his neighbours' chambers, and the place was 'windy, dense, and damp.' He feared, if he was to fall ill, that they would cast him out upon a dunghill, 'for there would not be anyone who would regard me better than a vile diseased dog.'* Plot tells a curious story of a swarm of bees which followed Vives to Oxford, and took up their home over his head under the leads of his study at the west end of the cloister at Corpus College. This the ingenious doctor considers very appropriate, for Corpus was called by its founder (Fox) the *Alvearium*, or Beehive, and the students *Ingeniosæ apes dies noctesque ceram ad dei honorem et dulciflua, mella conficientes, ad suam et universorum Christianorum commoditatem.* Vives' bees remained at Corpus till 1648, when, in sympathy with the fall of the monarchy, they died out.

Meanwhile, Wolsey was projecting schemes of University improvement. If he had remained in power, his plans would probably have included the building of new schools, the endowment of seven lectureships, and the foundation of a college on a scale hitherto unapproached. Cardinal College, for so he named his new foundation, was to hold 200 scholars, and for the vast endowment necessary for such a scheme the private resources even of a Wolsey were insufficient.

Chichele for the foundation of All Souls had obtained a grant of the revenues of some of the alien houses suppressed in 1415; and that precedent was before Wolsey's eyes when he obtained permission to suppress and divert to his new college the revenues

* Maxwell Lyte, 'Hist. Univ. of Oxford.'

of twenty-two small priories and convents. There is no doubt whatever that Wolsey, with other far-seeing Churchmen of that day, recognised that the work of monasticism was to a large extent over, and that, if the system was to be preserved at all, it could only be after a drastic purging and reform. If he had remained in power, it is probable that such an internal 'reformation' would have been carried out in a more temperate and sober spirit than the external 'reformation' which followed a few years later, and that thus much evil would have been avoided and much that was good spared.

The suppression of this little batch of religious houses was a premonition of what was to come. Other warning notes of reform had already been struck, and as far back as 1489 Innocent VIII., on the petition of Henry VII., had given Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, a general authority to inquire into the state of monasteries against which abuses were charged. Acting on this authority, Morton had made a state tour of inspection through his province, visiting, among other houses, Eynsham and Bicester.

About 1520 a strong effort to check the spread of 'reforming' opinions in Oxfordshire was made. John Longland was Bishop of Lincoln—in which diocese Oxfordshire lay—and did his best, backed by Henry VIII.'s authority, to extirpate heresy among his flock. Fox has a long list of the questions put by this 'fierce and cruel vexer' to such of the 'faithfull poore servants of Christ' as were suspected, and a longer list of the condemned and their sentences. The possession of English theological or devotional books was a frequent cause of offence. Thus, John Edmunds, of Burford, was condemned for reading in an English book after a marriage (the book was 'Nicodemus' Gospel,' and contained a story of the destruction of Jerusalem); John Clerk, of Clanfield, for saying that 'all the world was as well hallowed as church or churchyard'; Mr. Bruges, for gathering people in his house at Burford to 'read together in the Book of the Apocalypse, and commune concerning the opening of the book with seven clasps, etc.'; Henry Phip, of Stokenchurch, was yet more daring, for, being asked to take a walk to Wycombe, he answered that 'hee was chosen Roodman of his church' (that is, keeper of the rood-loft); 'he must go and tend a candle before his *Block*-Almighty,' meaning the wooden crucifix.

Burford appears to have been a focus of heresy, and where there were heretics informers were not lacking. One Roger Dods, a Burfordian, who seems to have been a professional heretic-finder, was servant with 'Sir' John Drury, Vicar of Windrush, and

'detected' his master, saying that Mr. Drury 'sware him upon a booke to keepe his counsels in all things, and after that he showed him a certain woman in his house,' and said she was his wife. On an ember day Mr. Drury counselled the virtuous Dods not to fast, but to sup with bread and cheese, using the text about that which goeth into a man's belly not defiling it. His Vicar was also wicked enough 'to teach him the A B C, to the intent he should have understanding in the Apocalypse.' When Dods spent eighteenpence in going to Worcester to see some of the True Blood, Mr. Drury told him he had wasted his money. 'Item, when the people would offer candles to Mary Magdalen, the Vicar would take them away, and say they were fooles' to bring them.

The Apocalypse was always a favourite with 'reformers,' who found infinite unction in the 'Skarlet-Lady and Whore-of-Babylon' passages. The other books which were most frequently condemned—at least, in Oxfordshire—seem to have been Wycliffe's 'Wicket' and the 'Shepherd's Calendar.'

It appears incredible that such a state of things could prevail among the simple Oxfordshire peasants, and in tiny villages like Asthall and Upton. Brother accused brother, wife 'appeached' husband, child 'detected' parent, a real 'inquisition' had been established, and if its punishments did not always include thumbscrew and stake, they were severe enough. Branding on the cheek, faggot-bearing in public (to show that they had only escaped the fire by grace), lifelong penance, and a formal abjuration of their opinions, followed the heretics' condemnation; if they relapsed again into heresy after abjuration, they were to be burnt, and Foxe mentions the names of six who actually came to the stake. The mark on the cheek was not to be hidden 'with hat, cap, hood, kerchief, napkin, or otherwise,' nor with more than fourteen days' growth of beard.

To the heretics of Burford special public penance was meted out. They were on a certain market-day to carry a faggot on their shoulders three times round the market-place, and then to stand with it for a quarter of an hour on the top step of the market-cross. On a certain Sunday they were to carry a faggot at the head of the church procession, and kneel with it on the altar-steps all the time of Mass. They were once to bear a faggot at a general procession of heretics at Uxbridge, and 'once at the burning of an heretique, when they shall bee monished thereto.'

Some had called the worshipping of images 'mawmetry' (mummery), and images 'carpenters chips'; one said he had

thrashed God Almighty out of the straw (referring to the Wafer); another, 'hearing a certaine bell in an upland steeple,' said it would make a good cow-bell; others called a ruined chapel a milking-shed, and their Vicar a poll-shorn priest. But for such coarse peasant jokes a heavy penalty fell on them, and batches of 'perpetual penitents' were drafted off to the seclusion of monasteries like convicts. Among the Oxford monasteries thus turned into prisons were Bicester, Dorchester, Eynsham, St. Frideswide's, Osney, and Thame. The Bishop of Lincoln sent letters commendatory with the penitents, or *abjurats*, as they were called. Thus he wrote to the Abbot of Eynsham: 'My loving brother, I recommend me heartily unto you, and whereas I have according to the law put this bearer [name] to perpetuall penance within your monastery of Eynsham, there to live as a penitent and not otherwise; I pray you, and nevertheless according unto the law command you to receive him and see you order him there according to his injunctions, which he will show you if you require the same. As for his lodging he will bring it with him; and his meat and drinke he may have such as you give of your almes. And if he can so order himselfe by his labour within your house in your businesse, whereby he may deserve his meat and drinke; so may you order him as yee see convenient to his deserts so that he passe not the precinct of your Monasterie. And thus fare ye heartily well: from my place,' etc.

They were poor little convents enough, the twenty-two houses that Wolsey got suppressed, many of them only making a desperate fight to keep going at all. Clement VII., in the Bull he issued for their suppression, premises that the Divine service cannot be properly kept up in houses containing less than seven religious, and so gives authority to dissolve those which fall below that requirement, stipulating that their inmates should be transferred to other houses. Even in the dissolution of such small houses odium was more than once excited, and bitter complaints made to the King accused Wolsey of rapine and the Priors of unworthy motives in giving up their houses. But Clement's Bull, fortified by royal consent, doomed one very notable house among the small fry; this was no other than the Augustinian Priory of St. Frideswide, whose monastic buildings and revenue of £300 a year were confiscated for the purposes of the new college. John Burton, last Prior of St. Frideswide's, was promoted to be Abbot of the great Augustinian house at Osney, across the water. So the oldest religious house in Oxford, first nunnery and afterwards monastery, was dissolved and demolished to make way for Cardinal College. The whole of the monastic

buildings were pulled down, and with them the Church of St. Michael, that stood by the South Gate. Of the conventual church the western bays were removed, and the other part of it left standing only till Wosley's new chapel should be ready to take its place.

The area so cleared was a very large one, with a fine frontage on St. Aldate's Street; the quadrangle was to be on a scale such as had never hitherto been seen. The first stone was laid July 12, 1525, and Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, preached a sermon on the text, 'Wisdom hath builded her house.' But the great Cardinal fell before the work was more than begun, and with him fell all his projects. It is little less than a tragedy to read now of the splendour that was to have been. The hall and kitchen are practically all that was accomplished of the original design, and the fact of those portions of the building being first finished was remembered in a scurrilous epigram, 'The Cardinal founded a college and finished an eating-house.' *Ex pede Herculem*, from hall and kitchen may be deduced the grandeur of the college that Wolsey had in view. 'If all the rest had been finished to that determinate end as it was begun,' says John Foxe, the Protestant martyrologist, a by no means partial critic, 'it might well have excelled not only all colleges of students, but also palaces of princes.' With Cardinal College fell the great school at Ipswich, which Wolsey had established to be its feeder, as Winchester of New College and Eton of King's.

Henry VIII.'s intentions with regard to the Oxford foundation seem to have vacillated, and his attention was fully occupied at the time with the question of his divorce from Katherine of Aragon. First of all he totally suppressed Cardinal College; then, two years later, he refounded it on a mean scale as King Henry VIII.'s College, an ecclesiastical foundation with very few inmates; and finally he superseded this in turn by the Christ Church which we know to-day. If this latter is not the Cardinal College that Wolsey's splendour designed, it is, at least, an improvement on shabby 'Henry VIII.'s College.'

Wolsey's fall followed immediately on the refusal of the Legatine Court to sanction Henry's divorce, and the King sought authority from other quarters to justify him in his resolve to put away his wife. The Universities of Europe were to be asked to pronounce their opinion that Henry's marriage with Katherine was incestuous. Cambridge acceded to the King's request with more facility than did Oxford. The feeling of Oxford was distinctly against the divorce, and special agents whom the King sent down to persuade, threaten, and bribe met

with a sorry reception; they were stoned in the streets, halters were hung up at their gates, and gallows chalked upon the doors. The sympathies of Oxford women naturally ran strongly in favour of the Queen, and their partisanship was manifested so openly that thirty of them were imprisoned for a time in Bocardo to cool their ardour. It would be tedious to follow in detail the sordid processes adopted by the King's creatures, including Warham, to cajole a vote out of the University in favour of the divorce. Threats of punishment if they should not fulfil the King's wishes, and promises of benefactions if they should, were openly made. They were warned 'not to stir up a hornets' nest' on the one hand, and money bribes were doled out to them on the other, and so at last a packed committee was appointed, with power to speak for the whole University, and of this a small majority did as the King wished. Their 'most probable, certain, and true opinion' was, they professed, 'that it is forbidden all Christians by the Laws of God and Nature that any brother should marry the Relict of his own brother, who dieth without children, if she hath been carnally known by him.' To this sordid announcement the University seal was appended April 8, 1530.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DISSOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS HOUSES.

STARTLING events followed each other with rapidity in the early part of the sixteenth century. After the Pope had through the Legatine Court refused to sanction the divorce, the King resolved upon a war *à outrance* with Rome. Wolsey's abysmal fall, the denial of Papal jurisdiction, the cruel assertion of the royal supremacy, and the crueller suppression of the monasteries, proved the vigour and the venom of Henry's attack.

In 1530, the year in which that disgraceful vote approving the divorce had been extracted from the University, Henry visited Oxford, and took into his own hands the whole of those charters which had so recently been revised and restored by Wolsey. They were not given back for some years, and their possession during the interval was a potent lever in the King's hands for influencing the University.

He used it in obtaining from them a formal sanction of the doctrine of the royal supremacy. The question the University had to decide was 'whether the Bishop of Rome hath any greater jurisdiction invested in him by God in the Holy Scripture over this kingdom of England than any other Bishop which is a foreigner.' Their answer was to the effect that 'the Bishop of Rome hath nowhere in Scripture a greater power conferred upon him by God within this realm of England than any other foreign Bishop whatsoever.' The same means were used in this instance to obtain an answer in accordance with the King's views as had been employed in the matter of the divorce. A packed committee was first appointed to answer for the entire community, then the University seal was fixed to the answer on July 27, 1534, in a full congregation, and a man-to-man examination of resident members was afterwards made, so that their personal assent to the general verdict might be obtained. Some

few were honest enough to refuse, and resigned Fellowships and scholarships rather than do what was repugnant to their conscience; but the generality gave their assent readily enough, as they would have given assent, no doubt, to an exactly contrary proposition, had it been put before them with the same arguments in the shape of penalties.

In a consideration of this period, one of the most striking features is the sang-froid with which the University was ready to approve each and any doctrine that was recommended to it by the 'powers that were' for the time being. It is indeed difficult to conceive that any body of men could with a serious face present such varied addresses to such varied authorities as were presented by Oxford to Warham, Wolsey, Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. It is obvious that the vast majority of the University cared nothing for any principles that were supposed to be involved so long as they were allowed to enjoy their temporal advantages; but there were of course exceptions—both Protestant and Romanist—such as those nine heads of houses who refused to take the oath of supremacy after Elizabeth's accession. The general attitude of Oxford for half a century at this time was one of anxious watching to see whether the Roman or Protestant party would ultimately prove successful. Their truckling to whatever party happened to be for the time in the ascendant was grotesque enough, and yet they tried so to truckle as not to be irretrievably committed should the opposition again come into power. 'The scholars were much divided among themselves what religion they should follow, part expecting that Popery should be restored, and part hoping that the Reformation should be compleated, and many being indifferent to both, and waiting to see which would get uppermost.'

In 1535 Henry, being content with the subservience to his wishes which the University had shown, and being anxious, no doubt, to have the moral support of Oxford in the critical paths of ecclesiastical polity which he was pursuing, gave back its charters. All Bulls and charters emanating from Popes were carefully cancelled, but the liberties and privileges granted in them were now ratified, and in some cases extended by his own royal authority. In the same year he sent Commissioners to Oxford with general powers to examine into University organization, and to make such reforms as should appear to them advisable. Some new Greek and Latin lectures were then established, but the energies of the Commissioners were chiefly directed to wiping out any traces of Papal jurisdiction that survived in Oxford. Their efforts were ably seconded by the enthusiasm of

the students, whose loyalty found congenial outlets in tearing down the signboards of some inns which showed Popes' heads, in smashing painted windows in which Popes were represented, and in erasing from their service-books the name of the Pope wherever it occurred.

Oxfordshire was not remarkable either for the number or for the individual importance of its religious houses. The following list, if it be not exhaustive, is at least sufficiently complete for practical purposes:

AUGUSTINIAN.

Bicester.
Caversham, a cell to Nutley Abbey.
? Chipping Norton.
Cold Norton.
? Clanfield, a cell to Elnestow in Bucks
Dorchester.
Elvenden, a cell to Goring.
Goring, a nunnery.
Osney.
Oxford, St. Frideswide's.
" St. Mary's.
Wroxton.

BENEDICTINE.

Cogges, an alien priory to Abbey of Fécamp.
Eynsham.
Godstow, a nunnery.
Littlemore, a nunnery.
Milton, a cell to Abingdon.
Minster Lovel, an alien priory to Ivry.
Oxford, Canterbury College.
" Durham College.
" Gloucester College.
Studley, a nunnery.

CISTERCIAN.

Bruerne.
Oxford, St. Bernard's College.
Oxford, Rewley
Thame.

FRIARIES.

Oxford, Dominicans.
" Franciscans.
" Carmelites.
" Austin.
Oxford, Crutched Friars.
" Penitentiarians.
" Trinitarians.

Besides these there were Templar preceptories at Gosford,* Cowley, and Sandford, all of which had passed to the Hospitallers two centuries before the Dissolution; a single Gilbertine priory at Clattercote; and that old house of Secular Canons, St. George's-within-the-Castle. There were hospitals at Banbury, Burford, Crowmarsh, Ewelme, Oxford St. Bartholomew, Oxford St. John-without-East-Gate, and Woodstock. These were either almshouses or leper-houses. Leprosy died out in the fifteenth century, and was practically extinct by the beginning of the sixteenth, though a leper-house was founded in Edinburgh so late as 1591.

It would be tedious to narrate even in the merest outline the

* Gosford, in Oxfordshire, and Hogshaw, in Bucks, are said to have been the only Templar houses for Sisters in England; but the constitution of such sisterhoods seems very uncertain.

history of each particular house. It must suffice here to say that the most important were Osney, St. Frideswide's, Rewley, and Eynsham. After these came Bicester, Dorchester, and Godstow. Mention must also be made of the Austin house of Nutley, in Bucks, and of the great Benedictine abbeys of Abingdon and Reading, all of which had a more or less intimate connection with Oxfordshire, although they lay outside the county boundaries.

In 1534 was passed the Act annexing to the Crown the first-fruits and yearly tenths from all ecclesiastical benefices, and as a corollary of the Act a new survey and valuation was made of all ecclesiastical property. This return is the famous *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of Henry VIII., a document of the highest historical importance. It appears that there were at the time 234 churches and chapels in Oxfordshire, besides three decayed. The dissolution of the smaller monastic houses (that is, those with a revenue less than £200 per annum) took place in 1536; the dissolution of the great houses followed in 1538-9; the chantries were not suppressed till ten years later.

Of the Oxfordshire houses, St. Frideswide's and Littlemore had been suppressed as early as 1524, at Wolsey's instigation, and their revenues diverted to Cardinal College. Bicester and Eynsham survived till 1539, the nunneries of Godstow and Studley till 1540, and the final fall of Osney was averted till 1546.

The years immediately preceding the suppression of the religious houses were a time, no doubt, of terrible anxiety to their inmates. Dissolution was 'in the air,' and wild misgivings and dread of what was to come filled all hearts. A curious story of the way in which these fears were worked upon by an impostor in Oxfordshire is told by Mr. Gasquet.* One James Billingford, a renegade priest, mounted a mule and went round from one monastery to another in the Warwick and Oxfordshire districts. He pretended that he was a 'visitor' sent to report on the houses, and that, being chaplain to Anne Boleyn, who was then Queen, he could secure her influence in favour of those who treated him well. At a monastery near Banbury this man demanded of the frightened prior £5 and his best gelding; but the place was so poor that a noble was all that could be spared, and the impostor took it with threats and imprecations. Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell heard of the matter, and set the hue and cry on Billingford, who was caught and imprisoned at Lincoln. But though it was proved he was a 'dicing and carding' scoundrel, who had extorted a

* Gasquet's 'Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries.'

good deal of money from the religious, nothing much seems to have been done to him, for he pretended he had been making secret inquiries to report to the King's Ministers.

Among the nefarious plans by which the visitors endeavoured to upset monastic discipline, and render the Superior's position untenable, was the encouragement given to monks to turn spy, and report secretly on the conduct of their brothers. There must have been an informer of this sort in the little Cistercian Abbey of Bruerne, near Chipping Norton, for the Abbot was three times had before the Court at Oxford to answer to a charge of 'preventing one of his monks from going off to London to lay complaints before Cromwell.' Vigorous efforts were made by founders and other interested persons to procure mercy for special houses, and the wretched Superiors were often driven to try to buy Cromwell's favour by the direct offer of substantial bribes.

Sometimes these efforts were apparently successful, but the respite was short, and the clouds soon returned. This was the case with the Benedictine nunnery of Studley, near Beckley. Bernard of St. Walery had founded it in 1184, and the nuns had since gained many privileges—among them pannage, or right of feeding hogs on the mast of Stowood; an offering to be made to the convent by certain lands on the Feast of the Assumption of 100 white loaves 'of the sort called in Oxford *Blanpeyn*'; the right to try causes and erect a private gallows in Corsley parish; the chattels of fugitives, waifs, estrays, infangenthef, utfangenthef, and free warren. In 1536 the visitors reported the house as of 'excellent conversation,' and it secured the protection of Lord Williams, probably because Joane Williams, the last Abbess, was a kinswoman of his, perhaps even his sister. So though Studley was a 'smaller house,' it survived the Dissolution of 1536, and was only surrendered in 1540, when it was sold to the Crokes for £1,187 7s. 11d. It is one of the few Oxfordshire houses of which any considerable remains survive, and Studley Priory as remodelled by George Croke is as beautiful to-day as it was in the time of the poor nuns, and still commands the same wide view over Otmoor.

Katherine Bulkeley, the last Abbess of the famous Benedictine nunnery at Godstow, fought hard to save her house. Dr. London, Warden of New College, and one of the most odious of the odious visitors, had quartered himself on the place. He was a man of evil morals and faulty behaviour, and the poor Abbess resented the manners of her unwelcome visitor. In 1537 she writes to Cromwell, begging him for protection against his agent, and recalling that he had been 'the verie meane to the King's

Majestie for my preferment, moste unworthie, to be abes of this monasterie of Godystowe, in the which offyce I trust I have done the beste in my power to the mayntenance of God's trewe honor with all treuthe and obedience to the Kyng's Majestie. And I trust to God that I have never offendyd God's lawes, nor the Kyng's, wherbie that this poore monasterie ought to be suppressed. And this notwithstonding, my good Lorde, Dr. London whiche (as your lordeship dothe well knowe) was ageynste my promotyon and hath ever sence borne me great malys and grudge, like my mortal enmye is sodenlie cummyd unto me with a greate rowte with him, and here doth threaten me and my susters, sayenge that he hathe the King's commission to suppress the house spyte of my tethe. And when he sawe that I was contente that he should do all things accordyng to his commyssyon, and showed him playne that I wolde never surrender to his hande being my awncyent enemye, now he begins to intreate me and to invegle my susters one by one, otherwise than ever I hearde tell that any of the Kyng's subjects hathe been handelyd, and here tarieth and contynueth to my great coste and charges, and will not taike my answere that I will not surrender till I have the Kyng's gratius commawndement or your good lordship's. Therefore I do moste humblie beseche you to contynewe my good Lorde as you ever have been, and to directe your honorable letters to remove him hens. And whensoever the Kyng's gratius commawndement or youres shall come unto me you shall find me most reddie and obedyent to foloe the same.' She goes on to say that though Dr. London, 'like an untrewe man,' has called her a 'spoiler and waster,' she has not 'alienatyd one halporthe of goods of this monasterie, movable or unmovable,' but has 'rather increasyd the same.'

She signs, 'At Godistow the V^th^ daie of November your most bownden bedeswoman, Katherine Bulkely Abbes there.'

London seems to have found out that the Abbess had friends at Court, and that she had written to Cromwell. His misgivings that he had gone too far prompted him to write himself to Cromwell a day later, and try to put a good face on his conduct by assuming an interest in the Abbess's welfare. 'I perceive,' he writes, 'my Ladye do take my commynge somethinge penciflye' (a delightful *meiosis*), 'and hathe desyred me to spare her determynat answer untill such tyme as sche may with convenyent spede know the Kyng's Highness determynat and resolute pleasure in that behalf. . . . And if the Kyng's grace's pleasur be notwithstanding . . . to take the howse by surrendyr, then I besek your Lordeshipp to admyt me an humble sutor for my lady

and her susters, and the late Abbasse,* that they may be favourably orderyd. . . . Many of the mynchyns be also agyd, and as I perceyve few of the other have any frynds wherfor I besek your lordeschipp to be gude lorde to them.'

The neighbouring gentry interceded on behalf of Godstow, for the nuns kept a famous school, to which many a squire sent his daughters, and so the place was spared a little longer; but Katherine Bulkeley was forced at last to surrender, at the end of 1539. Her Court interest was strong enough to secure her the liberal pension of £50 per annum.

Some time before the actual Dissolution signs of the coming storm had been sufficiently obvious to warn the members of religious houses of what they had to expect. It is not surprising under the circumstances to find that an effort was made by the religious in many cases to dispose at once of the property of which they would certainly be deprived in a very short time. Thus at Oxford, when the commission of visitors (consisting of Dr. London, with the Mayor and Aldermen) went to visit the Carmelites in the old Palace of Beaumont, they found that 'the Friars, in anticipation of their dissolution, had sold for £40 an annuity of £3 which their house had from the Abbot of Evesham, and divided the money. They were on the point of disposing of a similar annuity paid from the Abbey of Westminster. Moreover, their little land was all let on a thirty years' lease. Their ornaments, "as copes and vestments," Dr. London considered "pretty," and these he took. The rest of their belongings he thought "not worth £5 the lot."

At the Augustinians' all the trees had been felled. The Franciscans had good lands, woods, and "a pretty garden," but the house was large and ruinous, and they had been obliged to pawn most of their plate. Even the lead pipes of their conduit had been lately dug up "and cast into sixty-eight sows," twelve of which had been "sold to pay the expenses of taking up," but the rest the indefatigable doctor secured and "put into safe custody." He adds that the wind had lately blown down many of the trees, and, worse than all, the "house is roofed with slate, and not with lead." At the Dominicans they were more fortunate. "They have behind their house," he reports, "divers islands well wooded." and although their convent was only roofed with slate, the choir, "which was lately built, was covered with lead." Their plate also was valuable,

* The 'late Abbasse' was Margaret Tewkesbury, instituted in 1518. She afterwards resigned her dignity, but remained resident at Godstow.

especially a great "chalice of gold set with jewels, worth more than 100 marks."'

The same havoc that went on throughout England at the Dissolution went on, of course, in Oxfordshire, and if the county had in it no monastery so important as Glastonbury or Reading, and no shrine so rich as those of St. Cuthbert at Durham or St. Swithin at Winchester, yet there were at least the great church of Osney and the famous shrine of St. Frideswide, and a score of other churches which each possessed some special treasure. Even at this distance of time it is difficult to suppress a feeling of regret and indignation on reading of the destruction of so much that was so beautiful. Of the splendour of the abbey church at Osney mention has been already made, and the shrine of St. Frideswide was renowned throughout the land for its beauty and wealth. 'I will not stand now to enumerat the kings, nobles, gentry and others that continually offered to her, knowing their number to be infinite and endless. But what they offered was for the most part tapers, wax candles, ornaments, costly vestments, and rings; nay (and what was more than all) jewels and pretious stones.' It is difficult to conceive the enormous quantity of jewels, gold, and silver that were found in shrines such as this, or the wealth of plate, vestments, and books with which the monasteries were filled. From the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury alone were taken nearly 5,000 ounces of gold and more than 10,000 ounces of silver, besides jewels as 'big as goose's eggs,' and that amazing diamond called the 'Regal of Fraunce.' Though St. Frideswide's shrine could not vie with this, it was among the best known in the country, and proved most valuable plunder. The inventory of the church affords much interesting reading, with a 'pyx of the image of God gilt weighing 33 oz.; a holy-water bucket and a sprinkler of white silver weighing 33 oz.; a great bowl gilte with a cover weighing 68 oz.; 12 spoons with maiden heads weighing 22 oz.,' and numberless other items.

The monastic churches were extraordinarily rich in vestments and altar-cloths—'a cope of blew sylk woven with flower-de-luces, roses, and crownes of golde; 2 copes of black velvett laide with skalop shells of golde,' were among the treasures of St. Frideswide; and so on through the whole county. Even an abbey of the modest size of Thame had no less than thirty-eight sets of Eucharistic vestments.

The actual proceedings in the work of destruction varied but little. The surrender once signed, the church was 'defaced'—that is, the painted glass was broken, the stalls and screenwork

were pulled down, and the church generally put in such a state as to render it impossible for the monks to return and repair it. This was done with the greatest haste, for the King wished the step that he was taking to be irrevocable. Special attention was paid to the destruction and dishonouring of 'reliques and such roten bones.' An inventory was made of the vestments, plate, and jewels. Some were sold on the spot, some were sent to London for the Treasury, and a large proportion were embezzled by the Commissioners and by the crowd of local pilferers (gentle and simple) that hovered like vultures over the carcasses of the dead houses.

Then the land was strewn with ruined books from the monastic libraries. The leaves of priceless manuscripts were blown about the Oxford quadrangles, were made 'blanshers' to frighten game, or were used in Oxford privies. The missals were sent out of the country 'by shiploads' to be used for book-binding, while 'one merchant bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings,' and used them for wrapping his wares. 'This stuff,' adds John Bale, 'hath he used instead of grey paper by the space of more than 10 years, and hath yet store enough for as many years to come.'* It was computed that more than a quarter of a million of service-books were thus destroyed.

It was the same with the plate and vestments. 'Many private men's parlours were hung with altar-cloths, their tables and beds covered with copes instead of carpets and coverlids; and many made carousing-cups of the sacred chalices, as once Balshazzar celebrated his drunken feast in the sanctified vessels of the Temple. It was a sorry house and not worth the naming which had not somewhat of this furniture in it, though it were only a fair large cushion made of a cope or altar-cloth to adorn their windows or make their chairs appear to have somewhat in them of a chair of state.'†

Quod non fecerunt Barbari fecerunt Barberini—what Henry VIII.'s myrmidoms spared, Edward VI.'s spoiled. It is difficult to say which did most harm and to whom the palm of mischief should be awarded, for whereas the zeal of Henry's Commissioners was directed chiefly against monasteries, the zeal of Edward's was directed against every parish church in England. The one were specialists, and devoted their attention to wrecking anything that savoured of 'monks or freers or of the Pope'; the others were iconoclasts in general, and ran amuck at Catholicism itself by destroying everything that had pretension to beauty or value.

* Gasquet's 'Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries,' ii. 424.
† Haylin's 'Eccles. Restaurata,' quoted by Gasquet.

The hands of such men itched for plunder, and their eyes were wonderfully quick to detect superstition in anything valuable.

Even such valuables as escaped the storms of Edward VI. were not immune from petty peculation. It was often those who were officially entrusted with their safe-keeping that made away with them. In an inquiry held at the North Oxfordshire village of Souldern in 1585, John Hale 'acknowledges that in the year when he was Churchwarden he and his felowe did sell the chalice and boughte a Communion cuppe'; and another witness depones that 'he knew certeyne churche goods in M^r^ Stutchberies wifes hands, viz., candlesticks, a bason, a crucifyxe: or in Elizabeth Glidwell's hands, and in y^e^ same weomens hands certeyne handbells, & Banner-cloths Cross-cloths, and y^e^ Cross-crucifixe in John Douglas' hands, a palme cloth, and one chalice which M^r^ Stuttsbeirie hath in his hande for 40 shillings,' etc.

At Middleton Stoney things were much the same, from an inquiry as to the disappearance of church goods there, held (1585) in the Archdeacon's court. There appears to have been a cope parcelled out among these thieves. William Hawking deposes 'that being churchwarden, he had certeyn church goods which at the end of his yeare he delivered up, & hath at this present time but one peece of a coape which he paid xii^d^ for to Willm̃ Nixon.' William Nixon 'confesses y^t^ he hathe a peece of a coape, and a peece of a cross, and noe other thing or church goods & hath payd nothing to the churche for it yet.' Richard Smith 'confesses that he hath none of the churche goods but one peece of a coape. That he chaunged the chalece of the Parishe into a communion cuppe of the valewe of iij^li^. What the valewe of the chalece was he knoweth not nor how manie ownces.' Simon Smith 'confesses he hath a peece of a coape as his neighboares have, and a candlestick which he solde awaye by consent of his neighboare Carter for xij^d^ and hath answered to y^e^ churche as yet nothing for y^t^.' William Carter 'confesses he has a peece of a coape,' etc.; and so the sorry tale goes on.

It is gratifying to find that these official peculators were zealous in maintaining the discipline of the Church. Thus, the churchwardens of Fringford present Robert Ryve to the Archdeacon of Oxford's court in 1584 for non-attendance at church. Robert replies, and 'confesses that he kept his sheepe in the fylde upon a Sondaye before morning prayer & sayeth that he came to the church before the 2nd lesson was ended and there continued untill the Service was ended, and he brought in compurgators by whom he lawfully cleared himself. Wherefore the lord dismissed him with a monition to come more earlye to service.' In 1631, at

Bicester, Henry Benson, a servant, presented for non-attendance at church, alleges 'that he is not able this dead yeare to procure himselfe apparell by his labour, and did not therefore for want of cloathes fitting come to church, but hereafter hee intends to frequent prayers & to receive the Communion.' In 1634 Richard Mortimer confesses that 'he doth on Sunday sell aqua vite & treacle to such as for their healths sake do request the same, but he doth not open his shoppe windows.' Dismissed with a monition. Sometimes the offence is more serious, as in the case of John Clarke, of Fringford, who is put to public penance, 'Quia carnalem cognovit Margaretam Songe nuper ejus famulam, in festo Pentecostis ultimo, et sæpius postea.'

But besides destroying such precious articles as they could extract plunder from, they did a vast amount of wanton destruction to things which, so far as their personal gain was concerned might just as well have been left standing, 'lest it should be thought we care more for the treasure, thanne for avoiding th' abomination of ydolatry.' There are records in the churchwardens' expenses at Thame in 1547 of 'xxij shillings & ix pence for xxxix dayes work white lining the church,' which no doubt meant whitewashing over the frescoes.

So all painted windows were destroyed as containing superstitious 'ymages,' and most superstitious of all were reckoned the 'ymages' of Thomas à Becket. It was indeed a grievous outrage on the doctrine of the King's supremacy to see 'divers monks portrayed with rods in their hands, and the king kneeling naked before a monk, as he should be beaten at the shrine of Saint Thomas,' or to read in the Mass-books this 'Thomas Beckett's name with all his pestiferious collects.' So the virtuous Miles Coverdale writes to Cromwell complaining 'that in a glass window of our lady's chapel in the church of Henley-on-Thames, the image of Thomas Beckett with the whole feigned story of his death is suffered to stand still. Not only this but that all the beams, irons and candlesticks (whereon tapers & lights were wont to be set up unto images) remain still untaken down, whereby the poor simple unlearned people believe that they shall have liberty to set up their candles again unto images, and that the old fashion shall shortly return. . . . Now though Sir Walter Stonor knight be the King's justice of peace at Henley, yet (under your correction) I reckon great and notable negligence in the Bishop of Lincoln, which being so nigh doth not weed out such faults. Yea I fear it be as evil or worse in many more places in his diocese.'* One Oxfordshire window at least was lucky enough to survive,

* Gasquet, ii. 401.

and can still be seen in Waterperry Church. It commemorated Walter Curzon and Isabelle his wife, who were once buried under a gray marble tomb in the Austin Friary at Oxford. At the Dissolution the Curzon window and brasses were removed to Waterperry, where the family had a seat.

After the plunder of the plate and fittings at the Dissolution, attention was generally turned to the lead on the roofs and to the bells of the monastic churches. The lead was stripped off, and then melted down at fires made with peculiar appropriateness of the screens and stalls and broken woodwork in the great churches below. So nave and choir, arch and pillar, were blackened with the smoke of these evil bonfires, and at night there was a lurid glow through the broken windows, while inside the lead was run into pigs. The value of the lead so obtained was enormous,* and for weeks strings of carts filed through the country lanes carrying away the pigs to royal castles, which were used as storehouses. The bells were generally broken up and melted for gun metal; but now and then some pious person bought one or two for a present to another church, and it has been seen how the great peal of Osney was taken *en masse* and re-erected at Christ Church. Here and there, too, some generous local benefactor bought the abbey church outright, and presented it to his parish; and oftener the townsmen paid the price for it themselves, or, if they could not afford the whole, bought the nave, or sometimes only an aisle, in which they might worship as before.

The names of such benefactors deserve, surely, to be had in lasting remembrance, and one among them was Richard Beauforest, of Dorchester, who for £140 bought the Augustinian abbey there, and left it by a pious will† to his fellow-townsmen. An

* At Coventry estimated at £647, at Bury St. Edmunds at £3,302, sums corresponding at least to £7,000 and £35,000 of our money.

† 'In the name of God Amen, the xiii daye of July the yere of our Lorde God 1554, I Richarde Beauforest, of the Towne of Dorchester, within the Countie of Oxford, Gent, beyng sicke in bodye and hole of mynd and memory (thanks be to God), considering that nothing is more certen to man than death, and nothing more uncerten than the houre of death, doo make my last Wyll and Testamente in forme hereafter followinge. Fyrste, I bequeth my sowle to Allmyhtie God my Maker and Redemer, to haue the fruition of the Deitie with our blessed Ladie and all Saints, and my bodie to be buried in our Lady Ile within the Churche of Dorchester aforesaid. Itm, I gyve to the reparations of my Parishe churche xxs. Itm, I bequeth to my two Sonnes, Luke and Richarde, the one half of my goods moueable and unmoueable equally to be devyded betwyxt theym. And I bequeth to Anne Joyner, my dawghter, one sylver Cuppe p'cll gylte. Itm, I bequeth to Elizab. Hopkyns, my dawghter, one sylver Cuppe p'cll gylte. Itm, I bequeth to Ellen, my dawghter, Fortie shillings and ten sheep.

'Itm, I bequeth the Abbey Churche of Dorchester, which I haue bought, and the implements thereof, to the Paryshe of Dorchester aforesaid, so that the

uncle and namesake of his had been Abbot of Dorchester *circa* 1512, whose memory is recorded by a very perfect brass, with the inscription :

> 'Here lieth Sir Richard Bewfforeste
> Pray Jhesu give his sowle good reste.'

The total value of the monastic property confiscated at the Dissolution was enormous, but the percentage which finally reached the King's hands was comparatively small. To speak in modern parlance, the market was a forced one, and the houses only realized a 'break-up' value. Then there were the pilfering and embezzlement of those who actually carried out the suppression, and the grants of land to be made for little or nothing to courtiers and to those whose possible opposition it was necessary to compromise by making them participators in the spoil. So that it is reckoned that eventually only one-fifth of the actual value of the religious houses ever reached the royal treasury.

Out of the wreck of the monasteries grew up the 'new men.' 'To them good came from the hardships and misery inflicted upon hundreds of religious men and women and their retainers. They mounted into power and place upon the ruins of the old monastic houses, and laid the foundation of their family fortunes upon wealth filched in the name of the law from the patrimony of the poor.' Of founders of such new families, George Owen, the King's doctor, Sir Thomas Pope, and Lord Williams of Thame, were remarkable examples in Oxfordshire. Each of them acquired great landed possessions and wealth during the period of the Dissolution by fair means or foul, but on none of them does that curse appear to have fallen which enthusiasts have been accustomed to attach to the possessors of 'abbey lands.' Perhaps the edge of the punishment had been blunted by the foundation of Trinity College by Pope and Thame Grammar School by Lord Williams. On the other hand, Sir Henry Spelman (in 'History and Fate of Sacrilege') specially quotes Eynsham as an instance

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said Parishioners shall not sell alter or alienate the said Churche Implements, or anye part or p'cll thereof, with oute the consente of my heires and executors. Itm, I bequeth to everye one of my God children one Sheepe. Allso I bequeth to every one that is and shall be my S'vante at my departing out of this worlde two shillings. Itm, I bequeth to An Saunders, my S'vante, one Cowe. The reste of my Goods not bequeathed, my dets beyng payed and my bodye brought on earth, I gyve and bequeath to Alice my Wyffe, whom I make my sole executrix. Allso I ordeyne and make Roberte Joyner and William Hopkyns, my sonnes in lawe, Overseers of this my last Wyll and Testamente, and gyve and bequeth to ether of theym for their paynes xx*s*. These being Witnesses, Leonarde Lynghm, clerk to M^r^ John Bowyar, Roberte Joyner, Symon Betterton, James Moss, with others.'

where the abbey land passed quickly from one possessor to another, and brought ruin to each.

> 'For evil hands have abbey-lands
> Such evil fate in store;
> Such is the heritage that waits
> Church-robbers evermore.'*

It is probable enough that a great many of the owners of such lands came indeed to a bad end, but the proportion was not larger than would easily be accounted for by the terrible vicissitudes of a courtier's life at the time, and by that extravagance which is usually produced by the sudden acquisition of wealth. But if the abbey-lands brought misfortune to their new possessors, the deprivation of them brought ruin and despair to thousands of the old religious. It is easy to imagine the bitter grief which must have fallen on them when they saw their beautiful homes and churches ruined, and the hopelessness with which most of them must have regarded the change of life which was forced upon them. It was bad enough for those who still enjoyed health and strength in youth or in middle life, but for the aged or infirm—and especially for the nuns—the case must have been desperate. One thinks of Godstow and London's report, that 'many of the mynchyns be also aged, and few of the others have any friends.' 'It would be easy to multiply significant and touching incidents; to relate how Prior Goldstone of Canterbury pleaded to be left to die in his old rooms, or how the ruin of St. Edmundsbury broke the heart of Abbot Melford.'

In theory the religious were supposed to be pensioned; in practice the great majority received no pension at all. When pensions were given they were small enough, even allowing for the different value of money. The Abbots of even the greatest houses got no more than £100 per annum, and some of the smaller as little as £10. The Prior of Bicester was given £24. The pensions for the ordinary monks, where given at all, averaged perhaps £4 a piece, but the canons of Bicester got only 40s., and some pensioners got even less. Nuns were worse off than monks. An Abbess of an important house got £30 or £40 a year. Katherine Bulkeley, who fought so well for Godstow, was fortunate enough to get a pension of £50; but Joane Williams at Studley had to be content with £16 5s. 8d.

Some few of the monks were able to obtain other clerical employment, and among those who found smooth paths for themselves were Robert King, last Abbot of Osney, who became

* J. M. Neale, 'Mirror of Faith.'

first Bishop of Oxford, and Anthony Kitchen, last Abbot of Eynsham, who became Bishop of Llandaff. So also William Forrest, the poet-monk of Thame, after he had drawn his pension of £6 for some time, was made Vicar of Bledlow, and held that post till 1576.

But these were exceptionally fortunate. Death played havoc in the ranks even of the 'pensioners,' for want and privation soon told their tale. 'Abbey-lubber' was a common epithet for these outcasts, and it is small wonder if some of them fell into evil courses. Some of the homeless wanderers were branded with a V, for vagabond; and others fared worse still, for when some 'proper stoute abbey-men' were punished as vagabonds at Thame, 'they took their stocking and whipping verie ill. So they were sore bloodied, and one thereafter died no long while thereupon.'

So closed the history of the Oxfordshire religious houses, and one is tempted again to quote those words already quoted by Mr. Gasquet, which so aptly describe the dissolution of a religious house: 'The day came, and that a drear winter day, when its last Mass was sung, its last censer waved, its last congregation bent in rapt and lowly adoration before the altar there, and doubtless as the last tones of that day's evensong died away in the vaulted roof, there were not wanting those who lingered in the solemn stillness of the old massive pile, and who as the lights disappeared one by one felt that for them there was now a void, which could never be filled, because their old abbey, with its beautiful services, its frequent means of grace, its hospitality to strangers, and its loving care for God's poor, had passed away like an early morning dream, and was gone for ever.'*

Among the wreck of so much that was beautiful, it is pleasant to find that a reverence and love of the older things was still alive in some hearts, and one of these was John Leland's. In 1542 the great antiquary was made Rector of the Oxfordshire village of Haseley. Born in 1506, he had been educated at St. Paul's School, at Christ's College, Cambridge, and afterwards at All Souls, Oxford. Then, in 1530, Henry VIII. gave him the rectory of Popeling, in the Calais marches, and a little later made him 'Antiquary Royal,' with full powers to rummage in abbeys and documents to his heart's content. He was the first and last holder of the title, and none could better deserve it. It was after returning from his great archæological tour of six years through England that Henry made him Rector of Haseley; but five years

* W. H. Hart, 'Hist. et Cart. Mon. S. Petri Gloucestriæ.'

later he became mad, and died in 1552, at the early age of forty-six.

As a miserable set-off against the suppression of the monasteries, Henry VIII. founded six new bishoprics, of which Oxford was one. The see was carved out of the gigantic Diocese of Lincoln, of which it had formed part since old Remigius had moved his seat from Dorchester to Lincoln, in 1071. It was to be bounded by the limits of the county, and it possessed the 234 churches and chapels of which mention has already been made. Oxford itself became a 'city,' like the other towns in which the seats of the new sees were fixed.

The letters patent for the creation of the bishopric were issued in September, 1542. The title was to be the Bishopric of Osney and Thame, and the suppressed Abbey of Osney was chosen as the cathedral. The virtuous Henry desired only the 'correction of the monks' enormities and the promotion and maintenance of the worship of God according to primitive rule.' He considered the site of Osney, 'being near the town of Oxford, as a place apt and convenient for a Bishop's seat,' so he turned the great abbey church into a cathedral 'to the honour and glory of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin.'

The grandeur of the edifice was indeed well calculated to support the dignity of a cathedral. 'Here was a more than ordinary excellent Fabrick, & not only the Envy of other religious Houses in *England*, but also of many beyond Sea. Not only was it the admiration of the Neighbours, but Foreigners that came to the University for the Architecture, which was so exquisite and full of Variety of Workmanship, as Carvings, Cuttings, Pinnacles, Towers, &c., was so taking that Out-landers were invited thereby to come over & take draughts of it. Nor was it Inside less admirable, the Walls being adorned with rich Hangings, the Windows with awful Paintings, the Pillars with curious Statues & Images, the Floor with speaking Monuments, and all other Places with Rarities, Reliques, &c.'

But the glory of Osney was restored for only a very short period; for in 1545, with one of those gusty changes of purpose for which the times and the King were equally remarkable, the seat of the bishopric was transferred to the monastic Church of St. Frideswide. This happened a year after the King had definitely settled the constitution of that foundation which had been first Cardinal College, then King Henry VIII.'s College, and was henceforth to be known as Christ Church. The old monastic church, which had been turned into the college chapel, now became as well the cathedral church. The collegiate and

cathedral systems were thus curiously intertwined, and the joint establishment was placed under the control of a Dean and eight Canons.

With the transfer of the see to St. Frideswide the ruin of the buildings at Osney began, and was speedily complete. Its 'spacious lodgings and two bulky high towers,' its 'fine hall, convenient infirmary and dormitory, its Domus Dei erected for indigent people, who lived upon the offal meat that came from the monks' table,' its tannery, brewery, and bakehouse, have all passed away: there is scarcely a single stone left in the low-lying meadows to show to-day where the great abbey once stood.

Robert King was the first Bishop of Oxford. He came of a Devonshire family, but had been educated from a boy with the Cistercians of Rewley. He was Abbot in succession of the two Oxfordshire houses of Bruerne and Thame,* was suffragan Bishop to Lincoln, with the title of Bishop of Rheon, and afterwards, being translated to Osney, surrendered that abbey in 1539, and was appointed first Bishop of Oxford. He seems to have troubled himself as little as possible with the fiery questions of the day, and to have pursued his even way as Abbot or Bishop under Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Mary. He is especially reported to have taken no part in the heretic-hunting of the time, though his seal as Bishop was necessarily affixed to the letters which put the Protestant Bishops on their trial at Oxford. He died in the last year of Queen Mary.

The first Dean of Osney was John London, Warden of New College, who gained an infamous notoriety as one of the Commissioners in the monastic visitation. He did not long enjoy the 'wages of his unrighteousness,' for he was committed to the Fleet for perjury in 1545, and there died.

The old buildings of Gloucester College were at first assigned as the Bishop's palace, but when the endowment of the see was increased in 1549, the Bishop's residence was taken from him. Till Bishop Bancroft built the Palace of Cuddesdon, in 1632, the Bishops of Oxford had no official residence, and lived where they pleased or where they could. King seems to have lodged in that fine old gabled house in St. Aldate's, which still preserves his name.† At the end of Mary's reign, in 1557, he passed away, and was buried in the south transept of the cathedral, where are a monument and a painted window to his memory.‡

* In the drawing-room at Thame Park is a good picture of a man in secular dress, who is commonly said to be Robert King.

† 'Bishop King's House.' It is said to have been built by him, though it is probably of an earlier date.

‡ The window is interesting as containing a view of Osney Abbey, and also

On King's death Mary translated Thomas Goldwell, Bishop of St. Asaph, to the See of Oxford. But he never took possession of his new bishopric, for Mary died a few days after his appointment, and he, being a stanch Romanist, fled the country on Elizabeth's accession. He died long after at the age of eighty in Rome; but 'Fame represented that he was more devoted to the Black Art than skilful in Scripture.'

Elizabeth kept the revenues of the see in her own hands for some years, and no new Bishop was appointed till 1567. In this interregnum the diocese was ruled by one Walter Wright, Archdeacon of Oxford, who had held that preferment before the bishopric of Oxford was carved out of Lincoln. Like so many other ecclesiastics of the day, he trimmed his sails to suit the prevailing wind. In Catholic times he was the most zealous of Catholics, in Protestant the soundest of Protestants. Finally, he died in 1561 of apoplexy, whilst in the middle of a tirade against the Pope, and the suddenness of his end was naturally used to point a moral by his Roman Catholic opponents.

At last a new Bishop was appointed. This was Hugh Curwen, Archbishop of Dublin. He had distinguished himself long before as a preacher in favour of Henry VIII.'s divorce and his marriage with Anne Boleyn. 'Friar Peto (afterwards Cardinal) inveighed against the marriage in a sermon preached before the King at Greenwich. Dr. Curwen, happening to preach there the Sunday following, spoke as much for the King's marriage as Peto had against it, condemning him for his audaciousness in doing it to the King's face.' He afterwards obtained preferment, first as Dean of Hereford, then as Archbishop of Dublin; but finding the worries of the latter see too much for him, he asked Elizabeth to give him the quieter bishopric of Oxford. And so in his old age he was appointed (1567) Bishop of Oxford.

In the episcopal interregnum King's House, in St. Aldate's, had been alienated, and Curwen chose as his residence an old house of the Cobhams in the depths of the country at Swinbrook. But he did not live long to benefit by the restfulness of his new bishopric, and in 1568 he was buried in the little church at Swinbrook. His grave lies in the chancel before the great monument of the Fettiplaces, where six knights lie on 'shelves,' and with the stalls stolen from Burford on either side of it. It is said that Curwen's end was accelerated by an attack of acute melancholia, brought on by a contemplation of the wretched state of his diocese,

from its having been taken down and hid through the troubles of the Rebellion of members of the Bishop's family.

where all Church ordinances had been allowed to fall into disuse, where parsonages were ruined and churches unserved.

Curwen died in 1568, and it was not till 1589 that the next Bishop (John Underhill) was appointed by Elizabeth. He held the see only three years, and died in 1592 a poor and discontented man, because he had not received a higher promotion for which he hoped. Underhill had never even entered his diocese, and after his death ensued another vacancy of twelve years,* during which the bishopric became 'much dilapidated, and was made a prey for the most part to Robert, Earl of Essex, to whom it proved miserably fatal.'

John Bridges was appointed Bishop in 1604, and at least had the grace to reside in his diocese, using a house at Marsh Baldon, where he died in 1618. After him came Howson and Corbet, and in 1632 John Bancroft, who took away from the see the reproach of having no official residence, by building the palace at Cuddesdon. He procured from Charles a fixed charge of £100 a year, secured on the royal forests of Stowood and Shotover, to augment the episcopal revenue, and besides that the free use of Shotover timber in the construction of the house. Cuddesdon cost £3,500, a great sum in those days, but only had a ten years' existence, being burnt by Colonel Legge in 1644.

Bancroft's successor was Laud, and the history of the bishopric may be conveniently laid aside for a time till the period of the Civil Wars brings it again under consideration.

* Out of the fifty-five years of her reign, Elizabeth retained the episcopal revenues of Oxford in her own hands for forty-one.

CHAPTER XIV.

MARY: AND THE BISHOPS.

IN 1547, the close of Henry VIII.'s long reign saw the University dwindling in prestige, shorn of some of its wealth, blighted by the fall of the religious houses, decimated by the plague, racked with uncertainty as to the future, craven and truckling, anti-Papal, but still Catholic.

With the accession of Edward VI. further changes took place; the young King's power was put in commission, and his 'advisers' were zealous for 'Reformation.' Cranmer, whose conscience had convinced him of the righteousness of the divorce from Katherine, was naturally vigorously anti-Papal in his views. His Protestant virtues had secured inadequate recognition in the archbishopric of Canterbury, and as visitor of the University he was anxious that its religion should be properly purified.

By his influence one Peter Martyr, a zealous Reformer, was made Regius Professor of Divinity. The Protestant cause was very much in the ascendant, and Martyr was aggressive. There were frequent disputations between him and the Papists, at which inflammatory speeches led to actual disorder. To put a stop to such 'wrangling and contentions and to settle true religion,' a new Commission was sent to Oxford. As the Commission of 1535 had been violently anti-Papal, this Commission of 1547 was violently anti-Catholic. Everything was Protestantized, the forms of religion were changed, and a new body of statutes framed. These statutes, known as the Edwardian, remained in force until they were superseded by the Laudian statutes of the seventeenth century. Peter Martyr preached an eloquent sermon to the Commissioners on their arrival, taking for his text, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.' And then the havoc began.

Colleges were to the Commissioners, 'Stews for the Prostitutes of the Whore of Babylon,' the schools were the 'shrines of devils.'

So churches and chapels were gutted of their ornaments, altar vessels and carvings were defaced, and painted glass broken; the libraries were ransacked, and priceless books burnt and otherwise destroyed by cartloads as being the origin of superstition; the treasury itself was stripped of its plate, money, and curiosities. Pilfering and purloining of anything of value was carried on by the visitors themselves, and by those in their favour. It is difficult to estimate the immense destruction that was wrought, but the instance of All Souls may be quoted.

The Commissioners were empowered to amalgamate any of the smaller colleges whose revenues appeared inadequate to support a separate existence, but they seem to have considered all sufficiently well off to stand alone. They confiscated all the endowments of college chantries, nominally with a view to founding exhibitions, but many of the chantry lands were 'otherwise disposed of.' The townsfolk looked on at all these reforms with equanimity, if not with satisfaction; 'their minds,' in fact, were 'so erected' that they openly scoffed at the scholars, and thought that the city was at length really getting the upper hand of the University. But in one point their susceptibilities were wounded. Among the endowments to be confiscated as devoted to worthless purposes were the moneys given to choristers, and this touched the citizens to the quick, for most of them had sons in the college choirs. So strong representations were made at headquarters, this obnoxious reform was not proceeded with, and the 'quiresters'' endowments were preserved, a fact for which many Oxford boys have still cause to be thankful.

The religious reforms roused strong opposition in many parts of the country, and the feeling was brought to a climax when the new Prayer-Book was forcibly substituted for the Mass in parish churches on June 9 (Whit Sunday), 1549. The rural population was in a state of revolt, and the disturbances most aggravated in Devon and Somerset, Berks and Oxon. Lord Grey of Wilton was sent with 1,500 horse and foot, including a contingent of Italian mercenaries, to repress the revolters in Oxon and Berks. When he was called thence to Devon, he called a meeting of county squires at Witney, July 1, 1549, and appointed a Commission of seventeen gentlemen to assist the High Sheriff in the apprehension of traitorous people. Thirteen were specially proscribed, among whom were the Vicar of Chipping Norton and the parish priest of Bloxham, who were ordered to be hanged on their own steeples. Thus 'the Oxfordshire Papists are at last reduced to order, many of them being apprehended, and some gibbetted, and their heads fastened on the walls.'

With the death of the young King in 1553, the scenes were changed once more with kaleidoscopic rapidity, and the Catholic misrule and excesses of Mary superseded the Protestant misrule and excesses of Edward VI. As there had been an exodus of Catholics from Oxford in 1547, so now there was an exodus of Protestants.

Peter Martyr was one of the first to recognise the change. He girded up his loins and retreated to the more congenial atmosphere of Geneva, whither he was followed by many of his co-religionists. As he left Oxford, he heard the sanctus bell of Corpus Christi ringing at the Mass. 'Ah,' he said, 'this little bell hath overturned all my doctrine!'

But the bells rang another tune to the Catholics. The great peal (reputed the finest ring in England) of Osney Abbey had been taken at the Dissolution to the new college of Christ Church. The names which the bells bore originally have been preserved in a barbarous hexameter:

'Hautclere, Douce, Clement, Austyn, Marie, Gabriel, et John,'

but popular jargon had corrupted them before the Dissolution into:

'Mary and Jesus,
Meribus and Lucas,
New Bell and Thomas,
Conger and Goldston.'

This Thomas, now known as 'Great Tom' (a splendid bell weighing some 17,000 pounds), once bore the inscription,

'In Thomæ Laude resono Bim Bom sine fraude;'

but Dr. Tresham, a zealous Catholic, and then Vice-Chancellor of the University, 'when 'twas transported to Christchurch,'* re-christened it with the name of 'Mary, for joy of Marie's raigne.' He heard it ring 'when learned Juell was with him about other business,' and burst out with, 'O beautiful and sweet harmony! O fair Mary, how musical she sounds! with what melody she rings! how wonderfully she pleaseth our ears!'

'Thus he. And soe much was the old man delighted with the noise of it that he promised the students if they would come to masse, which was then restored, to get the "Lady Bell" at Bampton [of which place he was Vicar], and others added to it, and make the sweetest ring of bells in England.'

It was to be expected that the Catholics should make reprisals,

* It cost twenty shillings to carry from Osney to Christchurch.

and they did so. Catholic Commissioners were at once appointed to visit Oxford. Their powers were as usual wide and varied, and they endeavoured with ludicrous precision to reverse every action taken by their Protestant predecessors. They inquired particularly whether 'in the time of the schism anything had been appointed or brought into use that was contrary to the former canonical instructions,' and did away at once with such new-fangled customs. But, alas! they could not undo the havoc of the last reign; the broken glass, the plundered vessels, the defaced reredoses, and the ruined churches, were not lightly to be restored.

There was a conscious effort to repair some of the religious buildings, and the desolate state of the place must have cried aloud for restoration. One writer, speaking of the 'strange loss of scholars' which Oxford suffered in Edward VI.'s days, says that they 'bade adieu to the University, chusing rather to hear of the ruin of their mother at a distance than to be spectators of it, for such strange alterations followed that there scarce remained any footsteps of an University.' The lecture-halls belonging to various colleges on the south of the divinity schools had been pulled down by the townsmen, who added the sites to their gardens and built houses for themselves out of the materials. In Abbot Hooknorton's ugly schools the laundresses dried their linen. 'In fine, such had been the impiety of Edward's Commissioners that the whole University was turned into stables for horses and asses.'

There is something tragic in those last rays of the setting sun of Catholicism that fell on England in Mary's reign, in the fevered effort to make as not made that which was made once and for all, and in the bootless and short-lived attempt to restore something of the splendour that had passed away for ever. It is easy to imagine how grievous to earnest Catholics must have appeared the city of Oxford after the storms of Henry and Edward had swept over it. At every street corner the eye fell on the wrecks of religious houses, the splendid buildings tenantless and half ruined, the lands for the most part unoccupied, because the new owners did not yet feel secure enough in their ill-gotten gains to take any practical possession of them. It was perhaps so deplorable a spectacle that moved pious minds to restore two of the old foundations on a permanent basis. St. John's and Trinity Colleges remain as landmarks of this strange period; they are the last legacy of the dying religion, Catholic colleges founded on monastic ruins.

Sir Thomas Pope, the founder of Trinity, was an Oxfordshire

man born and bred. His birthplace was Deddington,* six miles from Banbury.' He was the eldest son of a small squire, and was educated first at the grammar school of Banbury, and afterwards at Eton. He studied law with great success, and filled several important posts in Chancery, the Star Chamber, and the Mint. He was apparently a statesman of the school of Wolsey, and (though a consistent Catholic) liberal in his views, and fully alive to the necessity of ecclesiastical reform. He became treasurer of Henry VIII.'s Court of Augmentations, which dealt with the confiscated monastic revenues, and in that capacity no doubt found many opportunities for acquiring 'abbey-lands' at a cheap rate without incurring the imputation of undue rapacity.† Under Edward VI. he retired from public life and lay perdu, like so many other Catholics of distinction, until Mary's accession recalled him to the Privy Council and a seat on many important civil and ecclesiastical Commissions.

In 1554 Sir Thomas Pope seems to have conceived the idea of founding a college out of the wreck of Durham College. The Priory of Durham, like several other of the great Benedictine monasteries, had a house at Oxford for such of its members as were studying in the University. It was known as Durham College, and beside the young Benedictines, sheltered a certain proportion of lay students drawn exclusively from the North Country. Though it thus partook to some extent of the nature of a civil foundation, it shared the suppression of Durham in 1540.

The site was afterwards acquired by George Owen, Henry VIII.'s physician, into whose hands came Godstow and a vast amount of other monastic property in and about Oxford. From him Sir Thomas Pope bought it, and early in 1555, under royal patent, turned the ruined Benedictine house into 'Trinity College,' for a President, twelve Fellows, and eight scholars.

The buildings were poor enough, the Benedictines' lodging had degenerated into something little better than 'dog-kennels,' and Pope does not seem to have troubled to improve them much. But he gave the place a very fair endowment in tithes and land (all monastic spoil), including the manors of Wroxton and

* Deddington is a sleepy little market town. A local quatrain compares its peculiarities with those of three neighbouring villages:

'Aynho on the Hill,
Clifton in the Clay,
Drunken Deddington,
And Hempton High-Way.'

† He seems only to have received the actual surrender of one religious house (St. Alban's), and there the abbey-church was preserved.

Balscot, in North Oxfordshire.* Shortly afterwards he presented to his new foundation an organ and a variety of service-books, crucifixes, and ornaments (including the famous St. Alban's chalice and paten), which he had saved from the ruin of the Dissolution.

Sir Thomas Pope in 1555 had joint charge of the Princess Elizabeth at Hatfield. During the time he acted as her gaoler he treated her kindly, and won her confidence without losing that of Mary. He was provident enough to enlist Elizabeth's sympathy on behalf of his new college. He flattered her by discussing with her the course he had 'devysed' for his 'scollers' and the general details of the foundation, and the young Princess was pleased to profess that she 'liked well his estatutes.' They were in effect conceived in so scholarly and yet so liberal a spirit, as to admit of an almost immediate change from Catholicism to Protestantism with a minimum of disturbance.

Pope himself retired again from politics soon after the establishment of his college, and died early in 1559, but his foundation flourishes to this day with buildings rebuilt and afterwards enlarged. By his will he left a great quantity of valuables to Trinity, including his 'dragon whistle, and black satten gowne with luserne spots.'

In the same year that Trinity was founded by Sir Thomas Pope on the ruins of Durham College, St. John the Baptist's was founded by Sir Thomas White on the ruins of St. Bernard's College, a house of the Cistercians.

St. Bernard's College owed its origin to the munificence of Archbishop Chichele, but its buildings had only been completed a very short time before the Dissolution, the hall being built in 1502, and the chapel consecrated in 1530. At the Dissolution in 1539 Henry VIII. gave it to his new college of Christ Church, from which it was acquired by Sir Thomas White in 1555. The monastic buildings had remained uninhabited for nearly twenty years, but easily admitted of repair, and though they have undergone many alterations, remain structurally the same to the present time.

Sir Thomas White was one of the princely London traders of the Middle Ages. He had been Sheriff of London, and afterwards Lord Mayor, and rallied the citizens about Mary's standard when Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion threatened. Above all, he was a Merchant Taylor, and loved his guild so well that he established magnificent endowments in connection with it in his new college.

* At the same time he founded a 'Jesus-schole' or grammar school at Hook Norton.

Thus a bond was formed between the Merchant Taylors' School in London and St. John's College, which, if not so close as it once was, is still very real and valuable.

Sir Thomas White was educated at Reading, and had in mind to found a school there, but afterwards determined instead to endow a college at Oxford. The romantic mysticism of the old religion had not yet passed away, and he accepted as a Divine warning a dream which bade him choose for a site the place where he should find three elm-trunks growing from a single root. At first he thought that a tree near the dissolved buildings of Gloucester College answered to this description, but afterwards was convinced that another* by St. Bernard's College better represented the fancy of his dream.

So on St. Bernard's was founded St. John's College. In its statutes White reverted to the older model, and drew them practically on the lines of New College. The foundation consisted of three chaplain priests, six bachelor clerks, six choristers, and fifty scholars and Fellows, who were to be drawn almost exclusively from Merchant Taylors' School. With White to watch over it the college did fairly well; but he died in 1566,† and then trouble

* The tree was pointed out in the college garden so late as 1697, and it is said that a lineal descendant of it is still flourishing in the same place. Plot dilates upon White's triple elm, and has some interesting notes as to other fine trees existing in Oxfordshire in his day. There was an oak at Nuneham which the Doctor laboriously computes would shelter 2,420 men from the 'injuries of sun or rain,' another in Magdalen water-walks could do as much for 3,456, and a third in Ricot Park excelled both with shelter for 4,374 men. There was an oak on Kidlington Green, in front of Judge Morton's house, to the hollow trunk of which the judge had a door fitted, and used it for a 'lock-up' for as many as ten vagabonds at a time till he could get them conveyed to Oxford Gaol. On Bletchingdon Green was a hollow elm-tree in which a 'poor big-bellyed woman' took refuge, and was there safely delivered of a son after 'she had been excluded from all the houses in the parish to prevent her bringing a charge on them.'

† A fortnight before his end he wrote a farewell letter to the college, in which breathes that spirit of peace which he ever ensued:

'Mr President with the Fellows & scholars, I have me recommended unto you from the bottom of my heart, desiring the Holy Ghost to be among you until the end of the world, and desiring Almighty God that every one of you may love one another as brethren, and I shall desire you all to apply your learning, and so doing God shall give you his blessing both in this world and in the world to come. And furthermore if any strife or variance do arise among you, I shall desire you for God's love to pacify it as much as you may, and so doing I put no doubt but God shall bless every one of you. And this shall be the last letter that ever I shall send unto you, and therefore I shall desire every one of you to take a copy of it for my sake. No more to you at this time, but the Lord have you in His keeping until the end of the world. Written the 27 of Jan.: 1566. I desire you all to pray for me that I may end my life with patience, and that He may take me to His mercies. By me Sir Thomas White, Knight, Alderman of Oxford & founder of S. John Baptist College in Oxford.'

This letter was printed, and Fellows and scholars still receive copies of it.

began. The change from Romanism to Protestantism was not effected so easily as at Trinity College, and St. John's at the end of the sixteenth century was a hot-bed of Catholicism, as it afterwards became of Royalism in the seventeenth, and of Jacobitism in the eighteenth. It was significant that at the solemn obsequies of the founder in the college chapel a funeral oration was pronounced over his grave by Edmund Campian, then a junior Fellow, and afterwards a famous Jesuit, who died for his faith at Tyburn.

White's munificence, 'which had poured over England like a torrent,' had exhausted his resources, and he died a poor man. Much of the endowment he had intended for his college never reached it, and for a quarter of a century after his death the place languished terribly. But with the beginning of the seventeenth century better fortune came, and by the time of Charles I.'s accession it was second to none in the University in position and influence. Of all colleges it is perhaps the most essentially Oxfordshire, its lands being for the most part in the vicinity of the place, and Walton Manor (now densely built over) and a great part of St. Giles' being still in its possession.

But if there was for Oxford a bright side to the Catholic reaction in the foundation of two new colleges, there was also a dark side, and on that dark side the blackest spot is to be found in the execution of Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer. The arrogant wealth and idleness of the monasteries produced the Dissolution; the rapacity and excesses of Edward VI.'s Ministers sent the pendulum back again to Catholicism under Mary; and now Mary's bigotry and persecution bred another reaction in favour of Protestantism. It is not too much to say that the burning of the Bishops is still as deeply rooted in English minds as any historical event, not excepting the Conquest itself, and did more than anything else to turn the scale against Catholicism in England for over three centuries. It was not an isolated event. The times were violent and brutal, and scores of scenes as hideous were probably enacted by Protestants as well as Catholics, of which history has taken little account. Burning itself was a judicial as well as a religious punishment, but of this particular burning popular imagination has taken hold, and probably because the arena and the actors were at once conspicuous, the burning of the Bishops has ever since formed an unanswerable argument in the hands of Protestant controversialists. Well known as the story is, some of the details will bear mention in a history of Oxfordshire.

In March, 1554, Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer were brought from the Tower of London to the prison of Bocardo, which was

over the North Gate of Oxford, adjoining St. Michael's Tower. Soon after began a wearying series of examinations, disputations, and trials. That they were mock trials goes without saying, for the condemnation of the prisoners was already decided upon. Sometimes the scene was the Divinity School, sometimes St. Mary's Church. There in the church the Commissioners specially appointed for the trial sat on a platform* built up in front of the high altar, and before them stood now one, now two, now three of the Bishops. There were interminably verbose disputations revolving generally round the doctrine of transubstantiation and the Pope's authority. There were accusations, articles, questions, and what not, and sometimes the monotony was broken by 'Master' Ridley refusing to remove his cap at the mention of the Pope's Holiness, and having it 'snatched verie hastilie from his head by one of the Bedles.' So the process dragged out its weary length. The Bishops proved themselves stout controversialists, but though they had spoken with the tongues of angels the result would have been the same. At the end of every disputation there was an ominous unanimity among the audience, a shouting of 'Vicit veritas' or 'Victoria,' and the victory was always with the Catholic Church and with the Bishops' implacable foes. So on October 16, 1555, Latimer and Ridley marched out of Bocardo to the stake.

The imprisonment of the Bishops at Oxford had aroused considerable sympathy, and Sir Henry Bedingfield, who was Elizabeth's gaoler at Woodstock, writes that 'the remaining of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer at Oxford in such sort as they do, hath done no small hurt in these parts, even among those that were known to be good afore.' Bedingfield did not prevent the young Princess from sending alms to Ridley, which he in turn distributed to his distressed prison companions. Ridley was at length handed over to the custody of one Alderman Irish, who seems to have been a kind gaoler, though his wife vexed the Bishop sorely.

There was a sad supper the night before the burning. Ridley's brother-in-law was there, but the Bishop kept up his courage and spoke cheerfully of his 'marriage' on the morrow. 'When they arose from the table, his brother-in-law offered to watch all night with him. But hee said, "No, no, that you shall not, for I minde (God willing) to goe to bed and to sleep as quietly to-night as ever I did in my life." So his brother departed exhorting him to

* Mr. Jackson ('Church of St. Mary the Virgin') attributes the cutting down of the finials of the choir-stalls to the erection of this stage; but it seems certain that on some occasions the stage was erected *over* the altar.

be of good cheere and to take his crosse quietly, for the reward was great.'

The stake was set up 'upon the North side of the towne in the ditch over against Baily College,' and Lord Williams of Thame was there as Sheriff of Oxford, and probably much against his will, with a strong posse to prevent tumult. As the Bishops walked to the stake they looked up towards Cranmer's prison, hoping to catch a last sight of him at a window; but the Archbishop was occupied with some of the usual disputes with Friars, and so not to be seen.

In Foxe's 'Martyrs' is a full-page illustration of the auto da fé. A ring of countless heads; in the centre, the Bishops at the stake surrounded by faggots; in the background, the city wall, the North Gate, on top of which stands Cranmer saying, 'Lord, strengthen them'; and New College Tower. On the right hand of the picture sits Lord Williams, with other chief authorities at his side; in his mouth is a label, 'Master Ridley, I will remember your suit.'* In front of him, in a little wooden pulpit, Dr. Smith preaches to the poor wretches at the stake on the text, 'Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' Latimer ejaculates, 'Father of Heaven, receive my soule'; Ridley, 'In manus tuas Domine.'

Ridley's brother-in-law brought bags of gunpowder to hang round the Bishops' necks, and they 'took them to be sent of God.' The smith fixed them to the stake with a chain round the belly. 'Good fellow, knocke it in hard,' said Ridley, 'for the flesh will have his course.' Ridley's faggots were fired first, and it was then that Latimer spoke those never-forgotten words: 'Bee of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; wee shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out.' It was soon over for Latimer; the flame got at him early, and the powder did its work. Not so with Ridley; the faggots† were wet, and though the gorse below them burnt fiercely, the flame could not get through the wood above. So his

* Referring to a request of Ridley that some leases signed by him as Bishop should not be invalidated by his fall, and that someone should protect his sister when he was gone.

† The expenses for the martyrdom are given in 'Oxoniana,' vol. i., p. 84:

	s.	*d.*
for 3 loads of wood to burn Latimer & Ridley ..	12	0
idem one load of furze faggots	3	6
for the carriage of the 4 loads	2	0
idem, a post	1	4
idem two chains	3	4
idem 2 staples	0	6
idem 4 labourers	2	8

legs were burnt first. 'Let the fire come unto me,' he cried; 'I cannot burne'; but his brother-in-law misunderstood the situation, and got more faggots heaped upon him. Underneath the pile of wood he leapt up and down in his agony, 'yet in all this torment hee forgate not to call upon God still, having in his mouth, "Lord, have mercie upon me," intermingling with this cry, "Let the fire come unto me; I cannot burne."' At last the flame touched the powder, and he 'was seene stirre no more.' His body with the legs charred off toppled and fell over the chain at Latimer's feet, and with it toppled and fell the Roman faith in England for three hundred years.

There seems no particularly good reason for doubting the accuracy of Foxe's plate, which represents Cranmer as having been a spectator of the burning of Ridley and Latimer. It must have been a sight to shake the strongest, and the recollection of it shook Cranmer. Nor was he, indeed, unversed in the horrors of such scenes, and the burning of 'Master Lambert' and others, at whose deaths he had himself 'assisted,' must have been often in his mind.

On September 12, 1555, he was 'tried' in St. Mary's Church, and made his defence against sixteen articles of accusation. Of course he was found guilty, and the result was transmitted to Rome. On December 4 he was deprived of his archbishopric, to which Cardinal Pole was soon afterwards appointed. In due course letters arrived from the Pope, commanding Cranmer to be degraded and delivered over to the secular arm. On St. Valentine's Day, 1556, Thurlby, Bishop of Ely, and Bonner, Bishop of London, arrived at Oxford to carry out the sentence of degradation. They sat in the choir of Christ Church, and Cranmer appeared before them. The ritual for degradation prescribed in the *Pontificale Romanum* was used. The Archbishop was vested for the Mass in archiepiscopal robes made of canvas, with a canvas mitre on his head, and a sham crosier in his hand. Then piece by piece they stripped off his robes; his pallium was taken from him. 'Then a Barbar clipped his hair round about, and the Bishop scraped the tops of his fingers where he had been anointed, wherein Bishop Bonner behaved himself as roughly and unmannerly as the other Bishop was to him soft and gentle. Last of all they stripped him out of his gowne into his jacket, and put upon him a poore yeoman Bedel's gowne full bare and nearly worn, and as evil favouredly made as one might lightly see, and a townes-man's cap on his head, and so delivered him to the secular power.'

After the ordeal was over, and Cranmer back in prison, a

friendly gentleman went in and asked him if he would drink. The Archbishop said that if there was a piece of salt fish,* he had better will to eat, for 'he had been that day somewhat troubled with this matter, and had eaten little, but now that it was past, his heart was well quieted.'

His antagonists were anxious to get him to recant his Protestant professions at any cost. It was thought well to see what effect some leniency would have upon him. He had been near three years in prison, and now they moved him to the Dean's house at Christ Church, where he 'lacked no delicate fare, played at the bowles, had his pleasure for walking and all other things that might bring him from Christ.'

Whether these Machiavelian allurements unduly softened his resolution and filled him with the love of life, or whether the memory of that awful morning when, from Bocardo roof, he had seen the Bishops burning, still haunted him; so it was that he recanted. He renounced, abhorred, and detested all manner of heresies and errors of Luther and Zwinglius; he believed and confessed one Catholic Church visible, without which there was no salvation; he acknowledged the Bishop of Rome to be supreme Head in earth and Christ's Vicar, unto whom all Christian people ought to be subject. He believed and worshipped in the Sacrament of the altar, the very body and blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine — the bread through the mighty power of God being turned into the body of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the wine into His blood. He believed in seven Sacraments, in purgatory, in prayers for the dead, and in the invocation of saints. He professed and believed all the Church of Rome

* Salt fish was an important item in the diet of the period, but it was often indifferently salted and 'went bad.' Mr. Macray, in his interesting 'Register of Magdalen College,' 1897, prints some bursary records which show that Magdalen disposed of its putrid fish and diseased sheep to the famished prisoners in Bocardo. Herrings were the staple salt fish, but salt eels and ling were also used. Cod, congers, haddocks, ling, merlans, and oysters were all in common consumption, and the favourite stew-pond fish were eels, pike, perch, and roach. In 1301 the Prior of Bicester spends '32 pence' for stocking the abbey fish-ponds with such fish, and presents of fish were often given by the abbeys to persons of distinction. Oxfordshire crayfish are, and were in the Middle Ages, esteemed a delicacy.

The Thames was always a 'fishy river.' 'In 1674,' says Plot, 'it gave so ample testimony of its great plenty that in two days appointed for the fishing of Mr Mayor & Bayliffe of the City it afforded betwixt Swithin's-Wear and Woolvercot-bridge (which I guess may be about 3 miles distant) fifteen hundred Jacks beside other fish.' It is interesting also to remember that the Thames was even in the present century a salmon river. The last salmon was caught at Boulter's Lock in 1821.

The stews, vivaria, or fish-ponds were a general adjunct of a big house, Plot mentions with special commendation the stews at Stanton Harcourt, Cornbury, Holton, and Shotover Forest House.

held and taught; he was sorry that ever he held or thought otherwise; and he besought Almighty God that of His mercy He would vouchsafe to forgive him whatever he had offended.

He made his recantation under promise of his life, implied if not expressed; but it was only the cat playing with the mouse. Mary's animosity, if well founded, was implacable; his death had long since been decided on, and Dr. Cole, Provost of Eton, had already been instructed 'to prepare a funerall sermon for the burning.' The wretched man was put to every shift that a man fighting hard for life tries—in the space of a month he signed six recantations. It was all no good. On March 21, very early in the morning, Dr. Cole, Provost of Eton, visited him, and, after exhorting him to constancy, asked him if he had any money. 'To whom when he answered that hee had none, hee delivered him fifteene Crownes to give the poore.' This was an omen of terrible significance, for the custom was to distribute alms before execution, and the Archbishop knew that his time was come. In the surprise of that awful awakening, when he saw that by no turn could he avoid death, courage and resolution came back to him. 'Soon after 9 of the clocke' the Lord Williams, Sir Thomas Bridges, Sir John Browne, other justices, noblemen, and a great train of waiting men, came into Oxford, and escorted Cranmer to St. Mary's Church. It was a sad procession. The Mayor and Aldermen went first, and then walked Cranmer between two Friars, who chanted penitential psalms. So they came to the University church. The Friars sung the *Nunc Dimittis* as they entered, and Cranmer was set upon a low wooden stage* erected below the pulpit. It had been intended that a sermon should be preached at the stake, but the morning was so windy and wet that it was thought better to deliver it in the church. Cole mounted the pulpit. His sermon was long. He proved the justice of the execution, made some reflections on the mutability of human greatness, comforted Cranmer in that he had made a recantation of his errors, and might hope to hear that day the words Christ spoke to the dying thief, *Hodie mecum eris in Paradiso*. God, he said, would make the flame to seem like a pleasant dew to him, as to the three children —to such as died in His faith God would 'either abate the fury of the flame or give strength to abide it.' He glorified God much for the Archbishop's conversion, and, 'lest he should carry

* In the base of a column opposite the pulpit in St. Mary's Church may still be seen a flat shelf formed by cutting away the mouldings, to which conjecture points as made for the support of such a stage (Jackson, 'Church of St. Mary the Virgin').

with him no comfort, he promised in the name of all the Priests that were present that immediately after his death there should be Diriges, Masses, and funerals executed for him in all the churches of Oxford for the succour of his sowle.'

'Cole, after he had ended his sermon, called backe the people that were ready to depart. "Brethren," sayde he, "lest any man should doubt of this man's earnest conversion and repentance, you shall heare him speake before you." '

In answer to Cole's appeal, the Archbishop rose. First he spoke on the general topics of Christianity proper to such an occasion; he counselled contempt of the world, obedience, brotherly love, and almsgiving. Then there was a pause of expectation as he began his personal confession of faith. In a moment he renounced and refused all things written with his hand, as 'written in the fear of death to save my life, if it might bee, and so as much as my hand offended, it shall be burned first. As for the Pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy and antichrist, with all his false doctrine.' As regards the Sacrament, he upheld all his Protestant teaching.

'The standers by were all astonied, marvelled, were amazed, and did looke one upon another. They let downe their eares, they raged, fretted, and fumed, and when he beganne to speake of the Sacrament and of the Papacie some of them begun to cry out, yelp, and bawl.'

'Stop the Heretic's mouth,' shouted Cole, 'and take him away.' He was dragged down from the platform, and hustled through the muddy streets to the stake amid the execrations of the 'friars.' The rest is well known. How he redeemed his time-serving prosperity and his death-fearing vacillation by an end of invincible and immovable fortitude. He 'lifted up his eyes to heaven' and held his 'unworthy right hand' in the fire, repeating over and over again the sweet ejaculation, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,' till in the greatness of the flame he gave up the ghost.

Friar John, one of the Spanish monks that stood by and marvelled at the Archbishop's bravery, ran up to Lord Williams, who sat as the arbiter of the tragedy, and cried that Cranmer's steadfast death was but a sign of the desperation in which he died. But Williams 'was not ignorant of the Archbishop's constancie,' and so he 'only smiled and, as it were by silence, rebuked the friar's folly.' Thus ended the tragedy, and the dispassionate observer will deplore the excesses into which religion has so often led its votaries, without affecting to draw any nice distinction between Catholic and Protestant, or weighing

in the balance the burning of Cranmer against the torture of Campian.

Antiquarian controversy has raged fiercely over the question of the exact site of the burning of the Bishops.* A cross of stones is laid down in the roadway of Broad Street, which is supposed to mark the spot, and a piece of charred wood† is shown in the Ashmolean collection as one of the identical stakes. It is improbable, though not impossible, that either position or stake is authentic. All that can certainly be affirmed is that these Bishops were burnt in a district then called Canditch, which is represented roughly by the Broad Street of to-day. The Canditch was originally the moat which ran outside the north wall of the city, and at a short distance from it. The north wall had ceased to be maintained at a comparatively early period. It was rebuilt, as we have seen, under Henry III., and repaired under Edward III. and Richard II.; but in 1583 there was much uncertainty even as to its course from a point in the gardens of Exeter College to New College Tower, where it reappears. Further towards the west, between Exeter College and the North Gate, or Bocardo, it ran behind the houses on the south side of Broad Street, but even there was mostly 'ruinated' at the time of the burning of the Bishops. The Canditch itself had been first parcelled into fish-ponds, and afterwards largely filled up. It is probable that in 1555 there was little or no water in it. On neither side of it was there any continuous row of houses at that date, though a few scattered cottages, cowsheds, and pigsties had been erected. If we suppose that the Bishops met their doom in an open space on the north side of this muddy depression,‡ nearly opposite the end of Turl Street, we shall possibly be not far from the truth.

In spite of the foundation of Trinity and St. John's, Mary's reign was a disastrous period for the University. There was a gloomy depression over everything. Men's minds were racked with uncertainty as to whether the Catholic or Protestant cause would ultimately triumph. Learning was stagnant; the 'Divinity schools were never so much as opened.' There were no public lectures, and scarcely one sermon a month. The attention of the colleges was concentrated on preserving their revenues from confiscation through the violent changes that were going on.

* For a long-winded discussion of the subject, *vide* 'Proceedings of Oxford Arch. and Hist. Soc.,' vol. iii., p. 234 *et seq.*

† 'A piece of heavy solid oak timber 16⅓ inches long, 4¼ inches square, roughly pointed at the lower end, and the upper burnt off by fire.'

‡ 'On the right hand wee see the Cittie Wall and some tokens of that Ditch wherein the Bishopps were burned. . . . As far as Smith Gate from Bocardo the Ditch is altogether damm'd up with Rubbish and small Cottages builded thereon.'—Hutten, pp. 132, 133.

CHAPTER XV.

ELIZABETH AND THE CATHOLICS.

ELIZABETH'S accession came as a vast relief to all. In her long reign of peace, Oxford too, found peace, and under the fostering care which she continually bestowed on learning, partly from a genuine affection for it, and partly from motives of display, the University gradually recovered its tone and prestige.

Queen Mary died in 1558, and on the same day passed away Cardinal Pole. At first there was some uncertainty what religious position Elizabeth would take up, and the hopes of the Catholics were not yet quenched. An address of congratulation from the University was presented to the Queen in London by the staunch old Romanist Tresham, who was then Vice-Chancellor. Elizabeth received it graciously, but it was seen ere long that her choice was for Protestantism. Following the example of her predecessors, she at once (1559) sent another Commission to Commission-ridden Oxford. The action of these new Commissioners was entirely anti-Catholic. But a far larger number than usual of those in position and authority had the courage of their convictions on this occasion, and refused to abjure the Papal claims. So deprivation followed, and a great body of Catholics left Oxford. It had happened before in Henry VIII.'s reign, and again under Edward VI., and they thought, no doubt, that some new change would in time recall them. But it was not to be, and the Romanists who left Oxford in 1559 left it for ever. Among them were distinguished men—Tresham himself, Martial and Smith of Christ Church, Reynolds of Merton, Jasper Heywood the poet, and William Allen of Oriel. Many of them went to the new-founded Catholic college of St. Peter at Douay, of which Smith became Dean. Allen was afterwards made a Cardinal.

Elizabeth was not unacquainted with the county, for twice in the course of her wandering imprisonments she had been guarded

in Oxfordshire houses. She had been a prisoner at Woodstock, and at Rycote under Lord Williams.

In March, 1554, Elizabeth was committed to the Tower on a charge of complicity in Sir Thomas Wyatt's rebellion; but in May of the same year Mary had cause to doubt her gaolers, and so transferred her to Woodstock. Sir Henry Bedingfield had charge of the young Princess, and treated her with as much kindness as was consistent with very close supervision. The old hunting palace of Woodstock had been practically disused for many years, and was so dilapidated that Elizabeth was not housed in the main building, but four rooms were fitted up for her reception in the gatehouse,* and hung with such stuffs as could be found. Her attendants had to make the best of the rambling and ruinous palace, but there was much grumbling. 'In the hoole house there was butte three doores onelye that were able to be locked and barred.' The 'tyling and glasing' were sadly out of repair, and Sir Henry Bedingfield, when the winter came on, wrote to the Council that 'the nights are longe and colde and manye of them weete, wherebye the poore soldiers shall not be able to continewe their watch about thys House stondyng upon the hyll.' The terrible cold of the Oxfordshire winter had evidently made an impression on him, and he begs that the guard may at least be kept within the gate.

Elizabeth pined in her strict confinement. Holinshed tells how 'hearing upon a time out of his garden at Woodstocke a certeine milkmaid singing pleasantlie, she wished herselfe to be a milkmaid, saieing that her case was better and life more merier than was hers in that state as she was.' She is said to have written with a piece of burnt wood on a shutter:

'Oh Fortune! how thy restlesse wavering state
Hath fraught with cares my troubled witt!
Witness this present prison whither fate
Could beare me & the joys I quitt.
Thou causedst the guiltie to be losed
From bandes wherein are innocents inclosed:
Causing the guiltles to be straight reserved
And freeing those that death hath well deserved.
But by her envie can be nothing wroughte,
So God send to my foes all they have thoughte.
ELIZABETH PRISONER.'

But one day in a more hopeful mood she cut with a diamond on a 'glasse window verie legiblie as followeth:

"Much suspected of me
Nothing proved can be
Quoth Elizabeth Prisoner."'

* Lord Lovelace lived in this gatehouse after the Rebellion, and it was taken down by the great Sarah because it spoilt the prospect from Blenheim.

She studied many good books in her solitude, and whiled away the long hours with embroidery. There is a little book of St. Paul's Epistles bound in an embroidered cover, and with a long religious inscription in her handwriting inside, which is shown in the Bodleian Library as the work of her captivity. It has embroidered on the outside

'Vicit Omnia
E ✱ C
Pertinax Veritas,'

but is probably to be attributed to a later period.

Her health ailed so that in October the Queen's physicians, Owen and Wendy, were sent to see her, and she derived much benefit from their treatment, especially from repeated bleedings. Among her amusements she coquetted with astrology, and had some 'secret consultations with a cunning clerk of Oxford, John Dee,' afterwards celebrated as a mathematician and astrologer. He acquired an influence with her which he retained as long as he lived. It is possible that a rumour of these secret interviews got abroad, and caused her removal from Woodstock in April, 1555.

A little islet in the lake at Blenheim, called Queen Elizabeth's Island, still preserves her memory.

As she had been twice imprisoned in the county, so she twice returned to it in all her state. In the course of those 'Progresses,' the display of which has always taken such a hold on popular imagination, she was at Oxford in 1566, and again in 1592.

It was in the afternoon of a remarkably* fine day of August, 1566, that Elizabeth arrived in Oxford. Leicester (then Chancellor of the University) had been there a day or two in advance to see that all was in readiness, and the University went out to meet her as far as Wolvercote, the boundary of their liberties. One Marbeck, who had held the office of public orator there, assailed her with a first speech, which she received graciously. At the city boundary outside St. Giles the Mayor and Corporation met her with a second speech, the tedium of which was mitigated by a handsome present of sixty gold angels in a silver-gilt cup. All along the Corn-Market the students were ranged, dressed in the gowns and paraphernalia of their various degrees. The citizens and country people thronged round, and looked down from the gates, windows, balconies, roofs, chimneys, and every post of vantage, however dangerous. The air rang again with shouts of 'Long live Queen Elizabeth!' Here the undergraduates had their turn, and Robert Deale made a third speech on their behalf.

* August 31 (*dies incredibili serenitate perspicuus*), Berebloci Commentarii, p. 3.

Then the procession moved on to Carfax, and there halted to hear a fourth speech in Greek from Lawrence, the professor of that tongue. The Queen was ready for the emergency, and began herself to reply in Greek, when either the vast press of people, or the unruliness of the mules that dragged her, forced her carriage further on, and so the speech came to a premature end. At last she reached Christ Church, where a royal lodging had been prepared for her. There she received a fifth speech from Kingsmill, public orator, which one historian finds 'a little long,' though this was perhaps necessary, as it reviewed the history of the University from its earliest infancy.

At last the Queen was allowed to retire, but not till she had heard a festive *Te Deum* sung in the cathedral. The journey and the speeches proved too much for her, and she did not show herself till Monday evening, when she was sufficiently recovered from her indisposition to witness some theatricals in Christ Church Hall. Just as all were seated, and the play was to begin, a raised platform at the end of the hall gave way under the crowd of spectators, and a student, a cook, and a brewer were crushed to death. The Queen was 'sorry for the mishappe, and forthwith sent her own surgeons to help them, but by that time they were past remedy.' The acting was not given up, but did not begin till midnight.

It was one of those academic plays replete with classicism, which had so permanent an influence on the early English stage. It was arranged by 'Mr. Edwards of the Queen's Chapell,' and called 'Palæmon and Arcyte.' Owing to the lateness of the hour of commencement, only half could be performed that night; but it was a great success, and the Queen was so taken with a pretty boy who played the heroine in a frock which had belonged to Queen Mary, that she gave him eight angels. 'Palæmon and Arcyte' was finished on Wednesday night. In the final scene the heroine prays at Diana's altar that it may be granted her to remain ever a maiden; but her prayer is not heard, and she becomes Palæmon's wife. This termination was received with frantic applause as an augury of the Queen's marriage. On Thursday a Latin play called 'Progne' fell very flat after the success of 'Palæmon and Arcyte.'

The Queen did very little sightseeing in Oxford, for all her afternoons were spent in hearing formal disputations. These disputations were conducted on strictly conventional lines. There were propounders of *theses*—opponents, determiners, and all the stock formalities. It must have been a dreary business at the best, for most of the questions were trite, trivial, or captious.

Each disputant commenced his argument with 'three congés to Her Majestie,' and conducted it with a properly sycophantic sense of her presence. Divinity, natural philosophy, law, and physic had each its turn, and the subjects varied from the cause of tides to the comparative advantages of an elective or hereditary monarchy. This last question, with Elizabeth in the chair, was no doubt easily settled, but the discussions were inordinately protracted. Indeed, every one spoke until the Proctors cut him short.

These disputations took place in the University church; it was a strange arena, but there was at that time no other so convenient. A raised platform was erected at the east end, and on it sat the Queen, surrounded by a few of her select counsellors. The disputants argued on the floor before her, and the spectators were accommodated on benches ranged down the sides of the church. For four hours every afternoon, from two o'clock till six, the Queen sat and listened to these wearisome discussions with much patience, and even with an occasional show of interest. On the last evening of her visit (Thursday) the arguments were unduly prolonged, and the church began to grow dark before the end came. Elizabeth closed the disputation with a short speech, in which she turned the gathering darkness to oratorical account. 'Those whose actions are bad,' she said, 'love the darkness, and so I think this darkness very opportune for me, who can speak but badly.' She applauded their eloquence, reproved them for praising her too much, and prayed that 'while she lived they might be most flourishing, and after her death most happy.'

The next morning (Friday) Dr. Pierce preached a Latin sermon on the text 'Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers,' but Elizabeth was so tired with the late sitting of the previous night that she was not present. After dinner the Proctors presented her with six pair of gloves that were 'very fine,' and were 'very thankfully accepted'; and then she left Oxford, passing down the High Street between rows of students and Professors, grouped according to their degrees. At Magdalen Bridge the city liberties ended, and the Mayor bade her farewell; but the University authorities accompanied her to Shotover. There she submitted once more to orations from the inevitable Marbeck and Deale, and made her adieus: 'Farewell, the worthy University of Oxford; farewell, my good subjects here; farewell, my dear scholars, and pray God prosper your studies. Farewell, farewell!'

On the evening of the same day the Queen reached the great house of Rycote, which must have had for her mingled memories.

Lord Williams, her kindly gaoler of another day, had passed away, and Mr. Norreys, his son-in-law, reigned at Rycote in his stead.

Her visit to Oxford had been a great success, and was long remembered as a golden event in the history of the place. It may, indeed, be considered to mark a turning-point in the fortunes of the University, for from that time they began steadily to improve. Twenty-six years later she came to Oxford again, and the programme was practically a reproduction of that arranged in 1566. But the second visit was not so brilliant as the first. The Queen was growing old, and her testiness showed itself now and then. She was no longer proof against the interminable speeches, and more than once cut short the wordy orators. The weather was foul as she entered the University liberties, and she only consented to hear 'the speech wherewithall they were provided, so that it was not too longe.' Afterwards, when a disputer in St. Mary's had discussed at great length the question 'whether, on account of the world's growing older, men were now less heroic than formerly,' and had at last come to a pause, the Proctors uttered their accustomed summons to the replier, 'Procede Magister'; but the Queen thought they were urging the original speaker to resume his argument, and cut in curtly with, 'He hath bene already too longe.'

On Sunday and Tuesday nights, September 24 and 26, two comedies, 'Bellum grammaticale' and 'Rivales,' were played, which 'being both of them but meanely performed (as we thought) were yet most graciouslye and with great patience heard by hir Majestie.' This 'mean performance' was a sad fall after the glories of 'Palæmon and Arcyte,' but Mr. Philip Stringer, who recounts the visit, was a Cambridge man, and so perhaps inclined to run down Oxford acting.

The Queen left Oxford at eleven o'clock on Thursday, September 28, 1592, and after hearing at Shotover 'a long tedious oration made unto her by the Junior Proctor,' proceeded once more to Rycote.

The University church, which witnessed the exhibition-discussions before Elizabeth, had witnessed a few years earlier (in 1560) the sad obsequies of Amy Robsart. 'The good earle,' writes Wood ironically, 'to make plaine to the world the great love he bore to her in her life time, and what a greife the losse of so vertuous a lady was to his tender heart, caused her body to be re-buried in S^t^ Marie's church Oxon with great pompe and solemnity.' The poor body, on which 'much violence had been used,' lay for a time at Gloucester College before it was taken to

St. Mary's. It was carried to Oxford secretly by night from Cumnor, and 'a great chamber where the mourners did dine, and that where the gentlewomen did dine, and beneath the stairs a great hall, were all hung with black cloth and garnished with scutcheons.' Leicester's chaplain, Dr. Francis Babington, preached a sermon at the funeral, but 'tript once or twice in his speech by "recommending to their memories that vertuous lady soe pitifully *murdered* instead of so pitifully *slayne*."' Leicester's innocence or guilt have been the subject of endless discussion, but contemporary opinion condemned him, and probabilities are perhaps in favour of his wife having come to her end by foul means.

Wood, writing a century later, says: 'Robert Dudley, earle of Leicester, a man of a very goodley person and singularly well featured, being much in grace and a great favourite with Queen Elizabeth, it was thought and commonly rumoured that if soe be he had bin but a bachelour or a widdower the Queen would have made him her husband. To this end to make him selfe free of that obstacle, he commands or perhaps with faire and flattering intreatie desires his wife to repose herselfe at Cumnor at his Servant's Anthony Forster's manor-house, and also prescribed to Sir Richard Varney (one of the earle's promoters of this designe at his coming hither that he should first attempt to take away her life by poyson, and in case if that tooke not effect then by any other way to dispatch her however. This it seemes was proved by the report of D^r^ Walter Bayley* who reported for most certaine that there was a practice in Cumnor among the conspirators to have poysoned the poore lady a little before she was killed which was attempted in this order:—They seeing the good lady sad and pensive as one that well knew that death was not farr remote, presumed to persuade her that her present distemper was abundance of melancholly and thereby would needs advise her to take some potion, which she utterly refused to doe as still suspecting the worst. Whereupon they sent a messenger one day—unknowing to her—for D^r^ Bayley aforesaid, and intreated him to persuade her to take some little potion by his direction, and they would procure the same at Oxon, they all this while meaning to have added somewhat of their owne for her comfort, as the Doctor upon just cause and consideration did suspect seeing their importunity and the small want the lady had of physicke. And therefore he peremptorily denied their request, misdoubting as he after reported lest if they had poysoned her under the name of his potion, he might not have been hanged for the colour of their sin. And the doctor remained still well assured that this

* Elizabeth's Court physician.

way taking not place, shee would not long escape violence; as after in this manner ensued. For Sir Richard Varney aforesaid, the cheife projector in this designe, who by the commandement of the Earle remayned that day of her death alone with her with one man only, and also Forster who had that day sent away perforce all her Servants from her to Abingdon Market about 3 miles remote from that place—they, I say, whether first stifling her or else strangling her afterwards flung her downe a pair of staires and broke her neck, using much violence upon her. But however though the common report went about that shee by chance fell downe the staires (but yet without hurting of her hood that stood upon her head) yet the inhabitants will tell you there that shee was conveyed from her usuall chamber where shee lay, to another where the bed-head stood close to a privy postern doore, where they in the night came and stifled her in her bed, bruised her head very sorely, broke her necke, and at length flung her downe staires thereby thinking to have blinded their villany. But behold the mercies of God in revenging and discovering this woman's death! For the man that was coadjutor aforesaid with Sir Richard Varney in this murder was afterwards taken for a felony in the Marches of Wales, and offering to publish the manner of the said murder was made away privily by the earle's appointment in the prison. And Sir Richard himselfe dying about the same time in London cried pitiously and blasphemed God, and said to a gentleman of note not long before his death that all the divells in Hell did teare him to pieces. Forster likewise, after this fact, being a man much given formerly to hospitality company mirth and musick, was afterwards observed to relinquish all this, and with much melancholly and pensiveness (some say madness) pined and drooped away. The wife also of Bald Butler, kinsman to my Lord, gave out the whole fact a little before her death. Neither are the following passages to be forgotten:—that as soone as ever shee was murdered they made great haste to bury her, before the Crowner had given in his inquest. Which her father Sir John Robertset, as I suppose, hearing of came with all speed thither, caused her corpp to be taken up, the crowner to set upon her, and further enquiry to be made concerning the business to the full: but it was generally thought that the earle stopped his mouthe, and made up the business betwixt them.'

'The Earle,' moralizes Wood, 'after all his murderings poysonings &c. was himself poysoned.' It was in Oxfordshire that he met his fate. He had been 'appointed Lieutenant-General of the army that mustered at Tilbury to resist the Armada. After the

crisis was past, he was returning homewards from the Court to Kenilworth, when he was attacked by a sudden illness' at his house of Cornbury in Wychwood Forest. There he died September 4, 1588.

It is said that Leicester suspected his wife, Lettice Knollys, of a guilty passion for Christopher Blount, his master of the horse, and intended to carry her off to Kenilworth, and there put her away. 'But the Countess having suspicion on some secret intelligence of this treachery against her, provided artificiall means to prevent the erle, which was by a cordiall, which she had no fit opportunity to offer him, till he came to Cornbury Hall in Oxfordshire; where the erle after his gluttonous manner surfeiting himself with much eating and drinking fell so ill that he was forced to stay there. Then the deadly cordiall was propounded unto him by the Countess.'

In the same year that Elizabeth paid her first visit to Oxford a heraldic visitation of the county was commenced. The visitation was undertaken generally throughout England about the same time, and consisted in one of the 'Kings of Arms' making a circuit through a county, visiting the various houses and churches, noting what arms appeared in painted windows or on sepulchral monuments, and afterwards holding a sort of court in each principal town, to which the neighbouring gentry were summoned to 'give proof of their arms.' If the proof of their right to such arms was satisfactory, they had to pay a substantial fee for using them. If the arms were 'false,' they were broken or defaced. There is more than a suspicion that the collection of the fees was the point to which most attention was paid, and visitations were no doubt a convenient way of raising a little money.

Such a visitation was begun through Oxfordshire in 1566, by William Harvey, Clarencieux King of Arms; but he never lived to complete it, being taken with a fever at Thame, where he died and was buried. His work was taken up by Richard Lee, Portcullis and deputy to Robert Cooke, Clarencieux, and by him finished in 1574.

In this visitation much valuable and authentic information is given as to Oxfordshire society towards the close of the sixteenth century. There are the names of 120 'commoner' families recorded as entitled to bear arms, and in most cases a pedigree is given. But the record is by no means an exhaustive one, and the first thing that strikes anyone in looking through the list is the absence of the names of certain great, though untitled, county families which ought undoubtedly to be there. The explanation of these omissions is easy. So far from there being any eagerness

to register as gentry bearing arms, most people seem to have tried to avoid putting in an appearance, in the hope of saving their fee. Every excuse was made use of, and many who found no excuse simply absented themselves on the chance of ultimately escaping notice. The University claimed exemption from the visitation altogether, under privileges given them by Henry IV. and Henry VIII. Thus the visitation, though of great value as regards the families mentioned, is not of the same value as showing that a family did not exist or did not bear arms, because no mention of it is here found.

Besides the visitation proper, Lee has left a list of the arms he found in twenty-six houses, sixty churches, and seventeen colleges. Coats of arms beautifully wrought in painted glass were a feature of the country mansions of the period; they were, in fact, in some sort a patent of gentility in themselves. Bolingbroke, rehearsing their crimes to Bushy and Green ('Richard II.,' Act III., scene 2), says:

> 'Whilst you have fed upon my signories,
> Dispark'd my parks, and fell'd my forest woods,
> From my own windows torn my household coat,
> Razed out my imprese, leaving me no sign,
> Save men's opinions and my living blood,
> To show the world I am a gentleman.'

Lee visited twenty-six* manor-houses, and found in their windows 221 coats of arms, all of which he 'tricked.' Of these houses not one now remains, and all the glass has, of course, perished.

The arms of Oxford and Woodstock and the seals of Banbury, Burford, and Witney were certified and allowed. The arms of the city of Oxford were: *Argent, an ox gules, armed and unguled or, passing over a ford of water in base proper;* the crest, *a demi-lion rampant guardant or, regally crowned of the first, holding between his paws a rose argent charged with another gules;* the supporters, *on the dexter side an elephant ermines, eared, collared, and lined argent, armed or; on the sinister side a beaver proper ducally collared and lined or;* with the motto, FORTIS EST VERITAS.

A second visitation of the county was made in 1634 by John Philpot, Somerset Herald, and William Ryley, Bluemantle, deputies to Sir Richard St. George, Clarencieux King of Arms.

* Minster Lovell, Sarsden, Heythrop, Swerford, Chastleton, Bruerne, 'Mr. Lenthall's House at Haseby,' 'Mr. Barentyne's House at Haseley,' Chadlington, Eynsham, Cornbury, 'Mr. Bromley's House,' Great Tew, Tackley, Ambrosden, North Aston, Deddington, Glympton, 'Mr. Frere's House, Oxford,' 'In the next house to Mr. Frere's,' 'Mr. Parat's House,' Drayton, Brightwell, Baldwin, Ewelme, 'Mr. Dormer's House.' A perusal of this list produces the impression that Lee's visitation of manor-houses was very incomplete.

They came to Oxford in August, 1634, but Dr. Pinke (Warden of New College), then Vice-Chancellor, entirely disclaimed their jurisdiction over the University. The heralds endeavoured to support it by 'a kinde of leave,' given them by the Archbishop of Canterbury, as Chancellor of the University, and by appealing to the precedent of the previous visitation of 1574. Dr. Pinke was, however, obstinate, and a search through the University records showed no admission of heraldic jurisdiction in 1574. Dr. Pinke gave them a 'table of ye college armes, blasoned in their proper collours and mettalls set forth by authorite by Jo. Scott, and said that ye colleges could not showe ye heraldes any other armes than them there sett forth; and so it would be needlesse for them to inquyre any further about it.' So the University carried its point, and no inquiry was made as to the arms of colleges or their members. 'The Vice-Chancellor entertayned them at a supper; they tooke their leaves and promised to make as fayre a report of their usage in y^e^ Universitie as they might.'

From the City Corporation they received much more consideration. The Mayor 'conferred with us concerning the effect of our commission: inquired in a hartie manner of the good health of his Majestie (our Royal Maister) the Queenes Ma^tie^, the Prince and all the roiall issue, and used us with very much respect, and presented us as from the Body of the Corporation, with a generous gratuitie, both to o'selves and follow^rs^.'

Whether in return for the 'generous gratuitie,' or for some other reason, the heralds increased the Oxford escutcheon by encircling it with a '*ribbon azure charged with four roses and four fleurs-de-lis or placed alternately, the ribbon edged of the last*,' and strewing the crest with '*fleurs-de-lis azure*.'

Woodstock also had its arms increased by two hairy savages for supporters; Banbury, Henley, and Chipping Norton verified their seals, but no mention is made on this occasion of Burford and Witney.

A comparison of the 1634 list of gentry with that of 1574 gives rise to some curious questions. One would have expected that in the interval of sixty years of quiet the numbers of the country gentry would have increased, or at least remained stationary. Yet the visitation lists of 1634 only show 97 gentle families, as against 120 in 1574. Again, we should expect to find in the main the same names in the register of 1634 that appeared in 1574. Two generations must, of course, make a certain change. Some old families would have moved or become extinct; some new families would have filled the houses thus made empty; but there is certainly nothing in the period to lead us to expect

abnormal change. The bloody Wars of the Roses had been over for a century, the wild religious vicissitudes of the Reformation were quieting down, the havoc of the Civil War had not begun, and yet out of the 120 families that were recorded in 1574 we find only 29 reappearing in the smaller muster-roll of 1634. After making every allowance for laxity or negligence on the part of the heralds, and for evasion on the part of the gentry, these figures are still remarkable, and the great change in the constitution of the county society is very difficult to account for. It was due in some measure perhaps to the rigour of the penal statutes against Catholics, but probably much more to the commercial activity which was so marked a feature of Elizabeth's reign, and which led many of the smaller gentry to sell their lands and embark the proceeds in mercantile enterprise.

Among the visitation records is a long list of those who disclaimed gentry. Others who wished to prove their arms were unable to do so. Some were given extra time to adduce proof, like Francis Gregory of Hordley, who 'promised to appeare at the Office of Armes in London to give satisfaction touching the armes he had sculped on his seale [viz., *Or two bars azure in chief a lion passant gardant of the last*] att or before the 10 Nov. next, 1634.' A memorandum added shows that Gregory, 'distrusting how hee was able to make proffe of his lawful right to the armes depicted in the margent, submitted the same to be defaced,' and the coat was defaced in his presence. Then follows a list of those who, failing to appear at first, had received warning to do so within a certain time; and another list of those who had neglected the warning altogether, and were now marked 'in contempt.' Among these latter appear such great names as Blunt of Maple Durham, Spencer, Dunch, and Dormer. 'Captaine Paramor' entered the arms of his ward Gerald Croker; Mr. William Bourne, being a pauper, was entered gratis; and Jo Keyt was 'given tyme till the last day of Michellmas Terme to demonstrate some prooffe for the armes [*azure a chevron between 3 ravens' heads erased or*] which hee caused to be ffixed uppon his father's monument in the church of Woodstock.'

There was a third visitation after the Restoration, but very little attention was paid to it, for heraldry was fast degenerating into the farce which it has now become. Anthony Wood mentions it in his diary.

'1668. *March* 18 and 19.—Sir Edw: Bysshe, Clarenceaux King of Armes, was at the Crowne Inn, near Carfax in Oxon, in order to visit part of the province belonging to Clarenceux. A. W. was with him several times, eate and drank with him, and had several

discourses with him concerning armes and armory, which he understood well; but found him nice and supercilious. Few Gentlemen appeared, because at that time there was a horse race at Brackley. Such that came to him he entered if they pleased. If they did not enter he was indifferent, so that the visitation was a trite thing. Many look'd on this matter as a trick to get money. A little before his departure he gave A. W. a dash of his office, viz., he entred 3 or more descents of his family, a copie of which he hath lying by him. Afterwards S^r^ Edward having a coach & four horses with him he went to Banbury. There was only with him old Wither, a herald painter of London, and his clerk [Gregorie], the former of which trick'd the coates, the other entred them in the book of visitation. He the said Sir Edw: Bysshe was in Oxon againe in 1675 to make an end of his visitation, but A. W. was then absent.'

Of all the families mentioned in 1634, it is probable that not half a dozen are still represented on the Oxfordshire lands; but there are a few other families which preserve Oxfordshire properties held at the time of the visitation, which by negligence or design are not included in the herald's record.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century those penal statutes against Roman Catholics were put into force, which for more than two centuries made life bitter to the professors of the older religion in England. It was the political activity of the Roman Catholics themselves, and more especially the influx of seminary priests from the Continent, that gave a pretext for repressive measures of abominable cruelty. With the reviving energies and intellectual prestige of Oxford had sprung up a reaction in favour of Catholicism. There was, in fact, at the end of the sixteenth century an 'Oxford Movement,' and its bent was towards Rome.

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign there had been a considerable exodus of Roman Catholics from Oxford. They retreated to the Continent, as they had done before in Edward VI.'s day, with the intention of waiting there till the storm was past. They had probably little doubt at first that the old religion would ere long be restored; but as such restoration grew more problematical, and their hopes less sure, they founded the celebrated seminary of Douay as a centre of Catholic teaching, which should be within touch of England, and at the same time safe from persecution. The founder of Douay, and the prime mover in the new Catholic movement, was William (afterwards Cardinal) Allen. He had left Oxford at Elizabeth's accession, and exercised a paramount influence over those who came under his charge at Douay. Scores of young Englishmen, filled with a passionate

attachment to the old religion, and representing some of the best intellect in Oxford, passed from that University to Douay; and after training there for a few years, returned to England strong in faith, and ready to die for the advancement of their creed. This intercourse between Douay and Oxford, and the strong leaven of Catholicity that existed in Oxford, are very remarkable. For the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign little notice was taken of it. The penal laws against Catholics were allowed to slumber, a very large proportion of the county gentry were Catholic at heart, the Marian priests and Bishops* who had left their cures on Elizabeth's accession lived quietly in the country, and were allowed to go from house to house saying Mass with a complaisant tolerance. But by degrees all this was changed, and Elizabeth and her councillors grew thoroughly alarmed as the activity of the Catholic emissaries increased, and as their zeal was no longer limited to religious proselytism, but embraced political conspiracy. So the rigour of the anti-Catholic statutes was put in force. All those who had sons or relations abroad were to recall them to England; whoever harboured Jesuits and seminary priests would be punished as a maintainer of rebels. The priests themselves were rebels, and as such liable to the punishment of death.

But the danger was no deterrent to those fiery spirits. They came over in greater numbers than ever, though they knew that they were coming to the gallows and the rack. Among such was Edmund Campian. He was at Oxford in 1560 as a brilliant young scholar, and made a euphuistic oration at Amy Robsart's grave. At Elizabeth's first progress, when he was twenty-six years old, and a Fellow of St. John's, he 'disputed' before the Queen in St. Mary's Church, and won Elizabeth's approval with some neatly-turned compliments. In 1567 he took English Orders, but immediately afterwards 'saw light,' and joined the Church of Rome. He went to Allen at Douay, and was admitted into the Society of Jesus, which at that time exercised a terrible fascination over spirits such as his.

So it was that in June of 1580 Campian landed in disguise at Dover. He came on St. John's Day, for the Baptist was his patron saint. He was disguised as a jewel-merchant, and Parsons, another Jesuit, his bosom friend and partner in this dangerous mission, had come a few days before as an officer returning from the 'Low Countries in a buff uniform, gold lace, and feathers.'

* Among them still survived some who had been Abbots in the older time before the Dissolution.

Campian displayed a limitless devotion and activity in the prosecution of his mission. He went from house to house among the Catholic gentry, offering the Mass in early mornings before little bands of the faithful gathered from the neighbourhood, firing his hearers with his eloquence, strengthening the weak knees, 'reconciling' many of those who had lapsed. At first fortune was with him, and he eluded his pursuers. He even dared to preach once openly in London itself, but immediately afterwards withdrew himself to the country. His favourite hiding-place was at the great Tudor house of the Stonors, which still stands near Henley. Here there was a chapel* attached to the house, and Lady Stonor gave him warm welcome. At Stonor House are to be seen to-day more than one of those curious hiding-places which proved so prominent a feature in the romance of the past generation. Secret staircases and rooms were a common and almost necessary provision of a medieval house, but their usefulness in sheltering the hunted Seminarists has earned for them the popular name of 'priests'' hiding-places. There were such places in more than one Oxfordshire mansion, as at Souldern,† Fritwell, Maple Durham, Broughton, Merton, and Chastleton; and in the recesses of the thick walls of the old house at Stonor Campian found so secure a refuge that he was able even to erect a little printing-press for theological tractates. It was from this illicit press that he issued in 1581 the famous book called 'The Reasons for being a Catholic,' which caused a great sensation in the controversial world, and made the pursuit of him still keener. The story of his arrest and of the final scenes of his life is picturesquely told by Froude.

He was apprehended at Lyford Manor-House near Abingdon. One Mrs. Yates lived there, and sheltered beneath her roof eight feeble old nuns of a dissolved Brigittine convent. Campian visited the house in July, 1581, and offered Mass before a large gathering of Catholics in the early summer morning. Being overborne by the solicitation of the ladies, and by the promise of a large audience from Oxford, he undertook to return to Lyford and preach on Sunday. But the affair got wind, and an agent of Leicester, named Eliot, surrounded the house with a posse of constables. Then he feigned himself a Catholic, and, entering, was present at the Mass and at the sermon. Campian preached on the text, 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets,

* Still standing. It was built *temp.* Edward III., and is one of the few that have never left Catholic hands.

† At Souldern the secret room was underneath the floor of a room at the top of the house, which served as a Catholic chapel so late as 1781.

and stonest them which are sent unto thee.' But before his sermon was ended an alarm was given, and the doors were beset with armed men. In the confusion Campian disappeared, and when 'Judas' Eliot appeared in true colours at the head of his constables, the Jesuit was nowhere to be found. All afternoon and night the search for him was unsuccessful, and it was not till Monday morning that Eliot drove a pick through the wall into a secret cupboard, and found the man he sought.

Campian was taken to the Tower, and there was given over for months to the mercies of 'Little Ease,' of the 'Scavenger's daughter,' the thumbscrew and the rack. At last the death sentence was pronounced. A vigorous appeal was made by the Catholics to the Duke of Alençon (who was then in England) to intercede on the Jesuit's behalf. 'The Duke was in the tennis-court on the point of commencing a game' when the appeal was made to him. 'He hesitated, stroked his face for a moment, and then, turning abruptly away, exclaimed, "Play!"' Elizabeth herself had not forgotten the bright young scholar whose speech had pleased her at Oxford fifteen years before, and was willing to give him one more chance. She had him brought before her, and asked him whether he believed the Bishop of Rome could lawfully excommunicate her; but he would not give a direct answer, and so his last hope was lost. Everything that cruelty could devise was done to torment him—needles were pushed under his nails,* his joints were dislocated on the rack. When he and his comrades were arraigned at a so-called trial for their lives, and when the rest held up their right hands as a sign that they pleaded 'Not Guilty,' Campian could not do so, for his arm was broken. He passed resolutely to the gallows at Tyburn, and the only mercy accorded to him was that the executioner did not 'bowel' him till he was dead.

So died Edmund Campian, and he was only one of scores of others who met their death in the same cause after equal agonies and with equal fortitude. The year after the Spanish Armada had made remorseless hostility to the Catholics, a Shibboleth of Loyalty, two Seminarists, Yaxley and Nicols, were arrested at midnight in an inn called the St. Catherine's Wheel at Oxford. They were engaged in giving spiritual advice to Mr. Thomas Belson, of Aston Rowant, and he was taken at the same time, and also the priest's servant, Prichard. All four were hanged, drawn, and quartered within the walls of Oxford Castle, and the

* When his body was cut down, it was found that every nail had been torn off it.

landlady of the Catherine Wheel was punished with imprisonment for life.

Twenty years later, in 1610, George Napper, another Seminarist, and once a Corpus man, was taken at Kirtlington, and found guilty at Oxford Assizes. He was, however, reprieved on account of his advanced age; but then in gaol he converted a fellow-prisoner, and so he, too, came to the gallows and the bowelling iron and the butcher's knife on Doiley's Castle Green. His quarters were placed on the four city gates, and his head on a tower of Christchurch. But the loving hands of his co-religionists in the city stole away the mangled limbs by night, and laid them to rest in the ruined chapel of the old Templar preceptory at Sandford.

And so the list might be indefinitely extended. If the priests were hounded to death, the lay Catholic's life was made a heavy burden for him. It is possible that then as now there was no more loyal body in England than the Catholic gentry as a body, but there were naturally among them some black sheep and some conspirators. But Pius V.'s Bull (1570) of excommunication and deposition of the Queen placed them in a terrible dilemma between loyalty and religion, and the Armada later on gave excuse to those who classed all Romanists as traitors. The service in the parish churches was Protestant, and the Catholic gentleman durst not 'for the peril of his soul go near it.' But now he was forced to do so by law. If he did not he was registered as a 'recusant,' and had to pay a fine of £20 a month, an enormous sum in those days, and, if enforced, equivalent in many cases to confiscation of his estates. They were forbidden to emigrate, 'and unless they will forget God and profess the errors which are here established, they will not only lose lands, liberty, and perhaps life, but through these laws now passed through Parliament they may leave tainted names to their children.'

It is small wonder if the Romanist creed was gradually battered out of Oxfordshire under such assaults as these. And yet there were some who dared to profess it in face of all, and the 'recusants' were duly registered by the Protestant Rectors in each town and village. There is a list of eighty-eight such returns made by the parsons in Oxfordshire villages preserved in the library at Stoneyhurst. A perusal of these returns (which are dated 1706) suggests that the parsons winked to some extent at the practice of the Roman Catholic faith in their parishes, and did not 'return' more names than need be. Ninety-six parishes are mentioned; and in sixty there are said to be no Papists, and in sixteen others only one apiece. Different members of a family

are mentioned if over thirteen years of age. In Fritwell eight names are given, and the same number in Barton Magna; in Sandford eleven; in North Aston sixteen; and the vicar adds that 'M. Sutton is supposed to be the priest who I am credibly informed reads Mass in my parish most Sundays and Holy Days.' At Somerton there were forty-eight, but in 1736 the numbers had dropped to twenty-five; and the churchwardens in their report say, 'We have probable grounds to believe the Roman Catholics meet sometimes for their service in a house in the parish, but they are civil and respectable.' Many of the recusants were in humble life, and quite unable to pay the fine, and in the case of those who could pay it is to be hoped that it was sometimes not exacted. But although the Catholic gentleman was left very largely to himself except in times of popular excitement, he was a pariah for more than two centuries, cut off from his fellow-squires and looked on with a mixture of dislike and fear, exiled from the bench of magistrates, from all office, and from public life in general, debarred from sending his sons to public school or University. Around the seats of Catholic families were naturally clustered Catholic retainers. So, for instance, at Somerton, which lay under the influence of the Romanist Fermors, fifty recusants are registered at the end of the sixteenth century; but with the extinction of that great family their co-religionists at Somerton dwindled, and became extinct, too. The same process went on also at Waterperry, where the Catholic family of Curzon were predominant, and elsewhere through the county, so that there is but the smallest sprinkling of Roman Catholics to-day among the rural population of Oxfordshire.

CHAPTER XVI.

JAMES I.

ELIZABETH was not unfrequently at Woodstock during her long reign. She travelled with such pomp and luxury, that she was able to put the rambling old house into something like an inhabitable state on these visits; but it was very different when the more parsimonious James I. was at Woodstock. 'The place is unwholesome,' writes Sir Robert Cecil, 'all the house standing upon springs. It is unsavoury, for there is no savour but of cows and pigs. It is uneaseful, for only the King and Queen with the privy chamber ladies, and some three or four of the Scotch Council, are lodged in the house, and neither chamberlain nor one English councillor have a room;' but perhaps the spleen of the Sassenach somewhat exaggerated the matter. Elizabeth visited more than once the hunting-lodge of Langley,* in the Wychwood Forest; but her favourite resort in that neighbourhood was Ditchley, the seat of Sir Henry Lee. 'Queen Elizabeth had a particular delight in this place, for which reason she used to stay here weeks, nay, months, together. . . . During her residence here once her picture was drawn at full length;' and the picture is still to be seen at Ditchley. Sir Henry Lee, a stout old sportsman, who 'many a time in his younger yeares would walk at nightes in the parke with his keepers,' was Ranger of Woodstock Park for half a century, and probably first became known to Elizabeth during her imprisonment at Woodstock Palace. The Lee family were constantly honoured with visits from Royalty. James was at Woodstock nearly every year of his reign, and seems regularly to have gone over to Ditchley to hunt. Hearne, writing of Ditchley in 1718, says he was 'mightily delighted with the sight of the old Hall,' hung round with stags' heads, under many of which were brass plates,

* Where a room is still called Queen Elizabeth's Bedroom: though possibly after Elizabeth of York, Queen of Henry VI.

recording royal prowess in the chase. An instance may suffice:

'1610. Aug: 22. Wednesday.

In Henly knap to hunt me, King James, Prince Henry found me,
Cornbury parke river to end their hunting drownd me.'

Besides the pleasures of the chase, there were often plays and other evening amusements. On a Sunday night in August, 1621, a comedy by the Archdeacon of Oxford, *Technogamia*, or 'The Marriage of the Arts,' was played. But it was a terribly tedious affair, 'too grave for the King; and some said the actors had taken too much wine before they began.' James tried to get away twice, but at last was persuaded to sit it out, 'though much against his will.' In 1612 there were great festivities in the old house, and Henry Prince of Wales (then a boy) 'made the King an entertainment with devices.' The young Prince died in the autumn of the same year of fever, but some of his kind actions lived after him; for there is a payment noted in 1617 of £13 6s. 8d. to a Woodstock shoemaker on behalf of a poor boy whom Prince Henry had taken out of the street, and at his own charges apprenticed as a shoemaker.

There were a good many Oxfordshire houses that could boast of a visit from the ubiquitous James—sometimes in the course of a formal 'progress,' sometimes in a more homely manner when the Court was hunting in the neighbourhood. Beside Ditchley, Wroxton, Broughton, Hanwell, and Chastleton all sheltered the King.

Sir William Pope, nephew of the founder of Trinity, entertained him at Wroxton in 1605 with 'hawking and bear-baiting.' Anne Pope, his baby daughter, was presented to the King, holding in her hand a copy of verses by Richard Corbet, then a student at Christ Church, and afterwards Bishop of Oxford. They are neat enough to bear reproduction:

'See, this little mistress here
Did never sit in Peter's chaire,
Or a triple crown did weare,
And yet she is a Pope.
No benefice she ever sold,
Nor did dispence with sins for gold,
She hardly is a sen'night old,
And yet she is a Pope.
No king her feet did ever kiss,
Or had from her worse look than this.
Nor did she ever hope,
To saint one with a rope,
And yet she is a Pope.
A female Pope you'll say, a second Joan,
No sure—she is Pope Innocent or none.'

Many changes had come over the University during the long reign of Elizabeth. They may be briefly summarized as a great revival of temporal prosperity; a large increase in the number of students; a completion of that process which had been going on so long, whereby the social class of the students was raised, and moneyed 'gentlemen' took the place of the struggling sons of low-born parents, while comfort and culture were advanced at the expense of vigorous study and original thought; and, finally, the triumph of the Anglican High Church party over Puritan and Roman Catholic.

In 1564 Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, became Chancellor of Oxford, and held his office till 1588. For nearly a quarter of a century he exercised a very definite influence over the University, and constantly interfered in the management of its affairs. Though the administration of his own patronage was as corrupt as might naturally have been expected of him, he seems to have been actuated in other matters by a real interest in the welfare of the place.* Many of his regulations were timely and beneficial; others were very much the reverse. Under his auspices the power of that select body which discussed and prepared motions to be afterwards submitted to the decision of the larger 'Convocation' was consolidated and increased. Any such initial discussion was entrusted to the Vice-Chancellor, Doctors, Proctors, and Heads of Houses; and this 'congregation' henceforward had the power of refusing to submit to the larger assembly any motion that appeared obnoxious. His influence was exerted consistently in favour of the Puritan party, and it was his eagerness to exclude Romanists from the University which led to the imposition of the Thirty-nine Article test. Every student over sixteen years of age was compelled to subscribe to the Articles on matriculation; but the measure, which Leicester intended as a weapon against Rome, was afterwards used mercilessly against the descendants of those Puritans whom he hoped to benefit. The test was indeed a sadly retrograde movement, and 'thenceforth the University of Oxford, once open to all Christendom, was narrowed into an exclusively Church of England institution, and became the favourite arena of Anglican controversy, developing more and more that special character, at once worldly and clerical, which it shares with Cambridge alone among the Universities of Europe.'

But all Leicester's fostering care of the Genevans was insufficient to check the progress of the High Church party. At his death the election of the new Chancellor was conducted on strictly

* Leicester's letters are pervaded by a spirit of piety which makes it difficult at times to doubt the writer's sincerity.

party lines. The Puritan champion was Essex, the Episcopalian Hatton, and the victory of the latter was a conclusive victory of the High Church party. From that time 'Oxford became the stronghold of Anglicanism, and the internal contests which divided the University were essentially contests between rival Church parties. The new faith, half political, half theological, affirming at once the Divine right of Kings and the Divine right of Bishops, found partial expression in James's own maxim, "No Bishop, no King." Absolutism allied itself naturally with the doctrinal system of Arminianism; the creed of Laud, embraced long ago by the fatuous King and Court, had already been adopted deliberately by Prince Charles; it was now to become the official creed of Oxford for nearly two generations.'

Three new colleges were founded about this time—Jesus in 1571, Wadham in 1610, and Pembroke in 1624.

Jesus is remarkable as being the first college of Protestant origin, though in its early days it could but ill-compare with the older foundations. It was founded by Hugo Price, Treasurer of St. David's, under letters patent from Elizabeth, on a site occupied by a group of little halls.* But the original buildings were poor and incomplete, and when an inscription was placed by the gateway,

'STRUXIT HUGO PRISIUS TIBI CLARA PALATIA JESU
UT DOCTOR LEGUM PECTORA DOCTA DARET,'

a cynical epigraphist retorted,

'NONDUM STRUXIT HUGO VIX FUNDAMENTA LOCAVIT
DET DEUS UT POSSIS DICERE STRUXIT HUGO.'

Its prosperity must be dated from the munificence of Sir Leoline Jenkins, who was Principal in 1661, and afterwards became a celebrated lawyer and politician. Jesus was founded by a Welshman, and from the first its students were recruited from the Principality, a semi-exclusiveness which has been preserved to the present day, though it is due to tradition, and not to any statutory authority.

A much more interesting institution was the great college founded in 1610 by Nicholas Wadham. The Wadhams were a Somerset family of pedigree, wealth, and position. They adhered to the old faith through the storms of the Reformation, and Nicholas Wadham seems to have been a Catholic till within a few years of his death.† He died, however, in the communion of the English

* Elm, Hawk, Lawrence and White Halls.

† There is Anthony Wood's statement that Nicholas Wadham was a Roman Catholic, and the corroborative fact that his wife Dorothy was present recusant 1613. *Vide* Jackson's 'Wadham College,' p. 87.

Church, and it is at least possible that the absorbing wish to found an English college may have influenced him in this change of religion. He and his wife Dorothy* were childless, and though his landed property was all entailed, he had accumulated wealth which he was anxious to put to some pious use. At first he contemplated, it is said, the foundation of a college at Venice for English Catholics, but afterwards changed his mind and determined to build a new college at Oxford. Death removed him before he could accomplish his wishes, but his widow Dorothy, with the executors, nobly carried out his designs.

For £600 they bought from the city of Oxford the site of the once famous Augustinian friary which figured so prominently in the machinery of the medieval University.† It is quite uncertain how much of the monastic buildings was standing when the site was sold, probably nothing of much importance, though some have attributed the excellence of the present architectural work at Wadham to an extensive survival of the older buildings, which thus gave, as it were, the cue to the new. However that may be, there rose on the Augustinian site a pile so magnificent and complete that it alone of all Oxford colleges has needed neither addition nor alteration to the present day, and still fulfils its founder's purpose as its founder left it. In outward appearance and in the conception of its statutes alike, it recalls the glories of the great medieval foundations, and, indeed, the buildings are perplexing from an archæological point of view; for while it is certain that none are older than the seventeenth century, parts of them, and especially the chapel, might easily be attributed to the Perpendicular style of a century and a half earlier.

And in this connection it is worth mentioning that the firm hold that medievalism had taken of the University is nowhere more clearly evinced than in the vitality of Gothic architecture in Oxford. Generations after the building traditions of the monasteries lay dead and buried with those great architects who carried them out, after Perpendicular had become debased and given way to the fantastic style of the Renaissance, after Renaissance had developed into more solid Jacobean, even amid the classicalities of the Restoration, Gothic architecture lingered at Oxford, and occasionally burst out in strange revivals. The list of late Gothic buildings at Oxford given in the footnote‡ is remarkable enough,

* Daughter of Sir William Petre, the benefactor of Exeter College.

† *Ante*, p. 88.

‡ ELIZABETH.

1571. Old buildings of Jesus commenced.
1596. Library, St. John's, built.

but among all the items the most remarkable is Wadham College. Who its architect was is uncertain. Holt of York has generally the credit of it, but Mr. Jackson ('Wadham College,' p. 32) gives reasons for thinking this credit undeserved. Holt was in an epitaph quoted by Wood, but now lost, called the architect of the schools, and to him has been attributed new work at Exeter, Jesus, Merton, University, and Oriel; but however this may be, —and Holt is a 'mysterious personage'—it is certain that the workmen who built it, and some of the material with which it is built, were imported from Somerset, the county of the Founder.*

In Somersetshire, as in Oxford, Perpendicular retained its hold to some extent long after it had lost it elsewhere, and anyone acquainted with the churches of the West Country, if he looks at Wadham Chapel through the fine arch that leads into the choir, will find it easy enough to imagine that he is looking at one of the

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1597. Sir T. Bodley commenced the repairs of Duke Humphrey's Library, and added the roof.
1600. Front of St. Alban's Hall built.
1602. Duke Humphrey's Library reopened after repairs.

JAMES I.

1610. First stone of the extension of Bodleian and Proscholium laid. Great quadrangle of Merton built. First stone of Wadham laid.
1612. West side of lesser quadrangle of Lincoln built.
1613. Wadham College opened.
1617. Hall of Jesus built.
1620. Hall of Trinity finished.
1621. Chapel of Jesus finished.
1624. Old Chapel of Exeter built.

CHARLES I.

1626. Library of Jesus built.
1628. Front of Bishop King's house rebuilt.
1631. First stone of garden front and lesser quadrangle of St. John's laid.
1631. Lincoln Chapel consecrated.
1634. West side of University built.
1635. West side of St. Edmund Hall opened.
1635. Front of University begun.
1637. Oriel quadrangle and Hall built.
1639. Chapel of University begun. (Finished 1665.)
1639-40. St. Mary Magdalen Chapel and Hall built.
1640. Hall, University, begun. (Finished 1657.)
1640. Staircase of Christ Church built.
1642. Oriel Chapel consecrated.
1656. Chapel, Brasenose, begun. (Finished 1666.)
1663. Library, Brasenose, opened.
1665. Chapel, University, consecrated.
1666. Chapel, Brasenose, consecrated.
1669. Library, University, opened.—*Archæological Journal*, vol. viii.

* Mr. Jackson thinks that the real 'architect' was one William Arnold, the master mason, as shown in the records of building expenses, etc.; and possibly a relation of John Arnold, the factotum and steward of Nicholas Wadham, and afterwards of Dorothy.

great Somersetshire interiors. It is no wonder that a close connection sprung up between the West Country college and the West Country, a tradition not yet completely broken down. In 1619 there is an entry in the register of Carew Ralegh, 'Fortissimi doctissimique equitis Gualteri Ralegh filius.'

In 1624 Broadgates Hall was converted into Pembroke College. Broadgates had been itself a development of an older Segrym's Hall, and took its name from the Lata Porta, or Broad Gate, which was apparently a feature of its front. Fuller preserves as an old saying, 'Send farthingales to Broadgates Hall'; for petticoats were so puffed out that they could only be wriggled sideways through an ordinary door.

Pembroke College owed its origin primarily to the benefaction of Thomas Tesdale, an Oxfordshire trader. Tesdale was a wealthy merchant of the type of Sir Thomas White, and his commercial ventures were numerous. He contracted for the clothing of Elizabeth's army, and was heard of at Court. Afterwards he was a maltster on a large scale at Abingdon, and Mayor of that town. Then he bought an estate at the little village of Glympton, near Woodstock, on the streamlet Glyme, amassed a new fortune by farming and selling of wool, and died there in 1610. There is a brass to his memory in Glympton Church, and a richly-painted and gilt monument to Maud his wife, setting forth 'her kindness to sundry bordering towns, S^t^ Mary's Church in y^e^ famous University of Oxon, Henly upon Thames where she was born and showed her bounty most liberaly, Abingdon where she sometime liv'd and hath left a perpetual remembrance of her love, Glympton, Charlbury, and Ascott, in all wch places she hath lovingly anointed Christ Jesus in his poor members.'

Tesdale left his money primarily to Abingdon School, to endow it with Fellowships and scholarships at Oxford. But when a few years later one Wightwick left a second great legacy to the same school, the Abingdonians determined to found for themselves an entirely new college at Oxford, and so Pembroke came into being. It was named after the Earl of Pembroke, the then Chancellor, and it was thought safer to make James I. the nominal founder of it.

Apart from the building of these three colleges, the outward resources of the University were enormously increased by the foundation of the Bodleian Library and what were then known as the New Schools.

Among the many princely benefactors that Oxford has known, a foremost place must be allotted to Sir Thomas Bodley, who,

'with a munificence which has rendered his name more immortal than the foundation of a family would have done, bestowed upon the University a library collected by him at great cost, built a magnificent room for its reception, and bequeathed large funds for its increase.'

Sir Thomas Bodley was born at Exeter in 1544, and some of his earlier years were spent at Geneva, whither his parents had fled in the days of Marian persecution. It was in the University of Geneva that he drank deep of the scholarly spirit of the Renaissance.

On Elizabeth's accession the Bodleys returned to England, and young Thomas joined Magdalen College, and was made a Fellow of Merton in 1564. Entering afterwards on a political career, he became an Ambassador, and was entrusted with several important missions. In 1597, finding his preferment obstructed by the jarring interests of Burleigh and Essex, he determined to indulge his academic tastes; and at the age of fifty-three abandoned politics entirely, and 'set up his staff at the Library door' in Oxford.

The Bodleian was not, of course, the first of Oxford libraries. We have already heard of Richard of Bury's library at Durham Hall, and Thomas Cobham's in the Congregation House, which were superseded by the glories of Duke Humphrey's collection of books lodged in that story which he built over the Divinity Schools. But the great Duke's library had fallen upon evil times when Edward VI.'s Commissioners wrought havoc in it. There, as elsewhere, 'many MSS., guilty of no other superstition than red letters in the front or titles, were condemned to the fire,' and 'such books wherein appeared angels were thought sufficient to be destroyed because accounted Papish, or diabolical, or both.' In their zeal to purge it of Popish books, the visitors made so clean a sweep of painted glass, carvings, furniture, and books, that only the shell of the Duke's library remained, and even that in a state little short of ruinous. On this Sir Thomas Bodley had compassion, and proposed to the University to furnish it again with seats, desks, and books, an offer which was gratefully accepted. He spent money lavishly, and sent buyers oversea to pick up books. In his scheme he interested his friends, such as Cotton, Savile, and Allen, and the library prospered so well that he added a great cross-piece at the west of Duke Humphrey's Library, which was opened with a solemn procession in 1602.* Casaubon, who visited Oxford shortly after Bodley's death, was

* He had collected 2,000 books before the opening ceremony; and there are now in the Bodleian some 450,000, and 30,000 manuscripts.

enraptured with the library, and called it 'a work rather for a King than for a private man.' He 'passed whole days' in the building, and wondered at the number of scholars who sat there 'greedily enjoying the banquet prepared for them.'

Bodley spent a fortune on the place, and bequeathed another for its maintenance; but its life-blood was the arrangement which he made before his death with the Stationers' Company in London, that they should present to his library in Oxford a copy of every book registered with them.

Part of Bodley's scheme was the erection of new 'schools' for the University, and the energies of his last years were devoted to the collection of support and contributions to that object. Death prevented his carrying out the work himself, as it prevented Nicholas Wadham, but the plan did not die with him. He passed away in London, January 28, 1612, and his body being brought to Oxford, lay in state, and was buried in the chapel of Merton, where a gowned effigy and a pile of books mark its last resting-place. The great bequests he left justified the commencement of the New Schools, and the foundation-stone was laid the very day after his funeral.

By a natural procession the 'schools' or teaching and examination rooms of the University had been evolved from those squalid rooms scattered all over the town, in which in the wild old times any teacher who could afford to hire a chamber lectured to any pupils he could induce to attend his lectures. Then these teaching-rooms were gradually collected together into Schools Street, and at length gathered into that single building erected in 1439, to which the Divinity School was added in 1445. But the accommodation which had been ample for the University, dwindling in the storms of the Reformation, proved inadequate for its reviving fortunes and increasing numbers at the end of the sixteenth century. So the New Schools of 1618 were built, and served their turn until they made way for the newer schools of 1882.

Holt* was the architect of the Jacobean buildings, which with the Bodleian Library formed a great quadrangle. It is a severe and stately pile, of which the Gate Tower is a prominent feature, Here one above another are piled the five orders of architecture. and in the highest story Loyalty placed a gilt statue of James I. It is said that the sceptre fell from his august hand at the shock of William's IV.'s accession, but recent repairs have restored tower and statue in all the glories of new white stone and gilding.

* *Ante*, p. 210.

The number of professorships had increased to fourteen* before the Civil Wars began, and of these six were founded in James I.'s reign. Sir Henry Savile,† Warden of Merton, founded in 1619 the Savilian Professorships of Geometry and Astronomy, but the Professor of Astronomy was expressly forbidden to meddle with judicial astrology.

For the twenty years which preceded the outbreak of the Civil War, the predominant influence in the University was that of Laud. William Laud was born at Reading in 1573, entered St. John's College, Oxford, as a scholar in 1590, and was made a Fellow in 1593. He was one of the Proctors in 1604, and his short build gave occasion to a punning criticism against his brother Proctor, Dale of Merton. Mr. Dale was unpopular, and when he laid down his office at the expiration of the year, the wits said the hissing and hooting were natural enough, for he had served 'cum parva Laude.' Laud was chosen President of St. John's College in 1611 by a stormy election, and after a bewildering catalogue of preliminary promotions was made Bishop of St. David's in 1621, and resigned his presidentship. In 1626 he became Bishop of Bath and Wells, in 1628 Bishop of London, and in 1633 Archbishop of Canterbury. He had already had some experience of the Metropolitan See, for he had served on an Episcopal Commission appointed in 1627 to administer the affairs of Canterbury during the sequestration of Abbot (Archbishop of Canterbury) for 'casual homicide.'‡ In 1630, on the death of the Earl of Pembroke, Laud was elected Chancellor of the University, in 1640 he was imprisoned, in 1641 he resigned the Chancellorship, and on January 10, 1644, he was beheaded.

The keynote of his High Church policy was heard so early as 1606, when he was preaching in St. Mary's, and was censured by the Vice-Chancellor for 'divers passages savouring of Popery,' which he 'let fall' in his sermon. During his Chancellorship he laboured continually to reform the discipline of the University. 'In one respect, indeed, his policy strongly resembled that of Leicester, for both maintained their influence by favouritism, and kept up a regular correspondence with confidential agents at Oxford, through whom they were informed of everything that passed there.

* Two of Divinity, and one each of History, Moral Philosophy, Geometry, Astronomy, Anatomy, Natural Philosophy, Music, Hebrew, Greek, Law, Physic, and Arabic.

† In Merton Chapel there is a Jacobean monument to him, with a representation of the Southern Hemisphere, and curious coloured views of Merton and Eton as then existing.

‡ Abbot had a shot at a buck and killed a keeper.

But while Leicester's inquisitorial vigilance was directed, not only against disturbers of the peace, but against persons suspected of Romanism, that of Laud was directed against Puritans and Calvinists.' His vigilance was incessant, and while he reformed some serious abuses, no detail of University life was too petty to escape his interference. His regulations resemble very strangely those introduced by the Parliamentary Visitors a generation later, and in both lists are found prescribed, rules of dress, behaviour, and hairdressing, and all the usual minutiæ that University law-givers delighted in.

A really serious abuse was reformed by an alteration of the method of electing Proctors. These elections had for a long time been made occasions for the display of race-rivalry, personal emulation, and general rioting. The election for any given year was now confined to the members of one college, and a cycle extending over twenty-three years was introduced to regulate the order in which each college was to enjoy the privilege of election. The cycle was schemed by an ingenious gentleman named Turner, and due regard was paid to the varying size and importance of the colleges.

But by far the most important of Laud's University reforms was the compilation of the code of 'Laudian Statutes.' The University Statutes had hitherto proved intractable enough. Wolsey and Edward VI.'s Commissioners, Bonner and Elizabeth's Commissioners, had all attempted to codify them, and yet when they were placed in Laud's hands in 1634, he found them 'in a miserable and confused heap.' In 1636 he was able to submit for the King's confirmation his Corpus Statutorum, which was destined to govern the University for more than two centuries. The Corpus Statutorum was, of course, for the most part a classification of already existing statutes, and cannot be discussed here; but some important changes were introduced, which more effectually than ever flung the entire administration of the University into the hands of the Heads of Houses. Laud gave innumerable proofs of his zealous affection for Oxford. He presented to the University many books, and a magnificent collection of Oriental manuscripts. He founded and endowed an Arabic professorship, and he broke the monopoly of the King's printers, and obtained for Oxford the right to print Bibles.

Among the articles of Laud's indictment figured the 'scandalous statue of the Virgin Mary with Christ in her arms,' which he had caused to be set up over the new south porch with twisted columns on the south side of St. Mary's Church. Many of the other charges were equally trivial, such as having the five wounds of

Christ worked on the cover of a book of devotion. But anything was good enough to serve his enemies' turn, and the headsman's axe let him enter rest on January 10, 1644.

His body was buried in a lead coffin in 'Allhallowes, Barking, by the Tower of London.' But after the King had come to his own again, St. John's College got leave to move the body to the college chapel. So one long July evening in 1663 most of the Fellows of St. John's (some twenty in number) walked out as far as Wheatley, and met the coffin there at seven o'clock. It was being carried on a four-wheeled litter drawn by four horses, and they all walked before it down Headington Hill. They reached Oxford at ten o'clock, wound slowly up 'the High' to St. Mary's Church, and thence up Cat Street to a back-door which opened into St. John's Gardens. Then eight of the Fellows lifted the coffin out, and carried it to the college chapel. Mr. George Gisbey, the Vice-President, made a little funeral speech, and 'they laid him, inclosed in a wooden coffin, in a little vault at the upper end of the chancell, between the Founder's and Bishop Juxon's. The next day they hung up 7 streamers.'

It will be useful here to review very briefly the general condition of the county before the Civil Wars began. A great deal of waste land had been reclaimed, and agriculture had made steady progress, but a large portion of the county was still uncultivated. Great tracts were covered by the old forests of Chiltern, Stowood, Shotover, Woodstock, and Wychwood. There were in the north of the county wide stretches of down. Otmoor was still the impracticable swamp it had been in the time of the Romans, and constant floods rendered of comparatively little value much of the land lying on the Thames.

Communication was difficult. An attempt had been made to improve the Thames as a waterway by an Act of Parliament of 1624, providing for 'the opening of the river from Burcote by Abingdon to Oxford for the benefit of the University and city,' and the first barge was brought up to Oxford on August 31, 1635. Plot expatiates on the advantage of the scheme, which was, no doubt, a vast improvement on the old 'falls,' down which a barge was washed as best it might be, and through which it was laboriously hauled up with a capstan on the b[illegible]. There were three 'locks' placed, at Iffley, Sandford, and 'Culham in the swift ditch,' and Plot talks fluently of their 'folding-doors, floodgates, and turn-pikes.' But he is bound to admit that, 'notwithstanding these provisions, the river Thames is not made so perfectly navigable to Oxford, but that in dry times barges do sometimes lie aground three weeks or a month or more, as we

have had sad experience this last summer.' It was in September, 1676, when Bathurst was refitting St. Mary's, and putting in a Father Smith organ, that the Bishop of Oxford, who was superintending the works, wrote: 'The lowness of the river is a disadvantage that may hinder the organ and other materials from being brought at the usual rates, and with the accustomed speed.' The ordinary method for conveying goods from London to Oxford seems to have been to carry them by water to Henley, and thence by road. But the roads were villainous, and some towns had practically no roads to them at all. 'There was no stoned road of any kind,' writes Giles in his history, 'leading from Bampton to the neighbouring towns and villages, and travellers were in the habit of striking across the common and finding their way to Witney, Burford, Oxford, or any other place as best they could.' In 1610 one Otho Nicholson of Christ Church* brought water at his own expense in pipes from the hillside above North Hinksey to a conduit at Carfax. The scheme cost £2,500, and the conduit was of good and elaborate design, and contained a large reservoir for the supply of the neighbouring colleges and houses. It was built in the crossing of the streets, and as early as 1634 complaints were made to Archbishop Laud, then Chancellor, that it blocked up the carriage-way. It stood, however, for a century and a half after this, but was at last taken down in 1787, and presented to the Earl of Harcourt, who re-erected it in Nuneham Park.

The life of the county was entirely agricultural. There were no important industries with the single exception of the manufacture of blankets, which had already achieved repute at Witney. Sheep-farming was extensively practised on the uplands and down-country, and Tesdale's example shows that large fortunes could be made by it.

Apart from Oxford itself, the four most important towns were Banbury, Woodstock, Henley, and Chipping Norton. The last had been incorporated by James I. in 1607.

Banbury was then, as now, the centre of a great agricultural district. It had been made a borough by Queen Mary, sent a member to Parliament, and was favoured with a weekly market, and no less than eight fairs in the course of the year. Fairs were always considered as a great privilege, as they did much to encourage trade, and those at Banbury were especially resorted to from all the countryside for hiring purposes. 'Banbury zeal, cakes, and ale' are commemorated in an old refrain, and the malting industry was largely carried on in the town.

* It is interesting to note that another Oxfordshire man, Yarnold of Woodstock, completed one of the earliest public water-services in England for Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1687.

Woodstock had been made by Elizabeth a staple for wool, and had a very important weekly market and four yearly fairs. It was known far and wide for its fine wrought-iron and steel work, and for its gloves. The iron work has long been a thing of the past, but the glove-making industry dwindles bravely on, and skins may still be seen bleaching on the hedges in neighbouring villages. Woodstock gloves were a favourite complimentary present to royal and other distinguished visitors to Oxford, and both Elizabeth and James I. were glad to accept richly embroidered pairs. On account of the number of stags in the chase, which were numbered at 6,000, there was always plenty of venison in Woodstock Market, and it was cheapest and in most perfection from June to Holy Rood Day. The place had a Corporation, and sent two members to Parliament.

This latter privilege had once been shared by other Oxfordshire towns. Deddington, Chipping Norton, Burford, and Witney had all returned members to Parliament in the days of Edward I. and III., but finding the privilege too expensive a luxury, they had been deprived of it on their own petition.

Bampton was a famous market for the sale of gloves, leggings, and jerkins of sheepskin dressed with the wool on them, which were thence dispersed through Berks, Wilts, and Dorset, 'no town in England,' says Plot, 'having a trade like it in that sort of ware.' Henley made some glass, was a great centre for the water-carrying trade, and thrived on its corn-markets and malting-kilns. Chair-making had already become hereditary in Stoken Church and other villages in the Chiltern beech-woods. Burford was known for its saddles, for bell-casting* on a small scale, and for the frequent race-meetings which the neighbouring gentry held on Shipton Downs.

But by far the most important industry of which seventeenth-century Oxfordshire could boast was blanket-weaving at Witney. Whether it was (as the ingenious Dr. Plot conjectures) that the waters of the Windrush, 'being nitrous, had peculiar abstersive qualities,' or that Witney was in the centre of a great wool-growing district, Witney blankets have ever been famous, and though the trade is no longer what it once was, the bright little place holds its own fairly well against the competition of the great blanket-weaving mills of the North, with their elaborate modern

* Neale was the name of the founder: he was buried in the north transept of Burford Church, which is called after him Bell-founder's Aisle. The Bagleys at Chacomb, near Banbury, were also busy founding bells in the early part of the seventeenth century. There are a great many of their bells in Oxfordshire towers (with the familiar inscription, 'Henry Bagley made mee'), and they continued the manufacture till late in the eighteenth century.

machinery. In the seventeenth century there were said to have been 150 looms, employing 3,000 hands, and the apogee of Witney's prosperity was probably reached in the establishment of a blanket-weavers' guild in 1711. A 'Blanket Hall' was soon afterwards built, but though the building still stands, it has long since been diverted to other purposes.

Other important places were Bicester, Watlington, and Thame, but Deddington, Dorchester, and Eynsham were all dwindling. As a guide to the relative importance of some Oxfordshire towns, it is worth while to notice that when the ship money was ordered to be levied in 1636 on counties, cities, and corporate towns, the following were the amounts of the contributions demanded from 'the county Oxfordshire one shipp of 280 tons and 112 men, £3,500; City of Oxforde, £100; Towne of Burforde, £40; Burrough and parish of Banbury, £40; Burrough or towne of Chipping Norton, £30; Burrough of Woodstocke, £20.' Again, the list of places issuing 'tokens' is interesting. The royal coinage of one penny, three farthings, halfpenny, and farthing pieces being small, inconvenient, and insufficient; tradesmen supplemented it by the issue of private tokens, which were given in change to their customers, remained in local circulation, and were redeemable in coin of the realm by the issuer whenever presented to him. These tokens were issued to a certain extent in Elizabeth's reign, and in the first ten years of James I. Then in 1613 issuing of tokens was forbidden by law, and not revived till the days of the Commonwealth. It was, however, in the quarter of a century from 1647-1672 that private tokens were most in vogue. They were generally small pieces of copper or bronze, and bore the name and device of the tradesman issuing them. Tokens of tradesmen in twenty-seven different places in Oxfordshire are known, but the most important centres were:

Oxford, with 71 kinds.	Henley, with 11.
Witney, with 23.	Watlington, with 10.
Banbury, with 22.	Bicester and Burford, with 8 apiece.
Thame, with 16.	Woodstock, with 5.
Chipping Norton, with 14.	Deddington, with 4.

In 1672 all such private coinage was rigidly suppressed by an Act for 'making current His Majesty's farthings and halfpence of copper, and forbidding all others to be used.' In some cases tradesmen's tokens had already been suppressed by corporations who wished to coin themselves. Thus, in the Corporation records of Henley there is an entry: 'May 14, 1669.—The farthings and halfpence already made by several inhabitants of Henley ordered to be cry'd down, and the warden to procure a stamp for the Corporation according to the stamp of the seal of the warden's

office, and procure to be immediately stamped as many farthings as will be bought with £7 10s. silver.' Another entry, September 20, 1672 (when all except the royal coinage were done away) runs: 'Ordered that £30 be raised by the Corporation by mortgage for the present exchange of ye farthings and halfpence now called in by the King's proclamation.'

There were endowed schools at Banbury, Bicester, Burford, Deddington, Ewelme, Henley, Hooknorton, Oxford, Thame, Watlington, Witney, and Woodstock, and in a history compiled by Cox at the end of the seventeenth century he mentions 'charity schools' at Bampton, Bloxham, Cuddesdon, Deddington, Haseley, Islip, Kirtlington, Middleton Stoney, Mixbury, Shiplake, Whitchurch, and Witney. These 'charity schools' seem to have been for the most part dependent on the liberality of the 'ministers' of the various places, and their existence was probably of a more or less precarious nature.

Of the county families appearing in the Visitation of 1634, the most important at the time were: Cobb of Adderbury, Curson of Waterperry, Doyley of Stadhampton and of Chiselhampton, Fettiplace* of Swinbrook, Fiennes of Broughton, Hungerford of Black Bourton, Lacy of Shipton-under-Wychwood, Lenthall of Lachford and Burford, Pollard of Nuneham, Tipping of Draycote, and Wenman of Caswell and Thame. Besides these must be mentioned: Chamberlain of Shirburn, Cope of Hanwell, Dormer of Rousham and Milton, Fermor of Somerton and Tusmore, Harcourt of Stanton Harcourt, Norreys of Rycote, Pope of Wroxton, and Stonor of Stonor, who, because they had titles or for other reasons, do not appear in the Visitation.

Church-building had entirely ceased with the Reformation, and with the exception of work in Oxford itself, there is practically no ecclesiastical building to note in the county during the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., Charles I., and the Commonwealth. But the century which preceded the Civil War was a period of vigorous house-building, and Oxfordshire is particularly rich in those Elizabethan and Jacobean mansions which have never been surpassed for beauty and comfort either before or since. Among the more remarkable examples may be quoted houses or parts of houses at Asthall, Broughton, Burford, Chastleton, Deddington, Fritwell, Gaunt House, Hampton Gay, Hardwicke, Pudlicote, Rousham, Rycote, Shipton-under-Wychwood, Shutford, Water-Eaton, Wroxton, and Yarnton.

* An Oxfordshire proverb says of the district round Shipton:

'The Lacys, the Tracys, and the Fettiplaces,
Own all the manors, the parks, and the chases.'

The estate of Chastleton had belonged to Robert Catesby, but he sold it in 1602 to raise funds for the Gunpowder Plot. The purchaser was one Walter Jones, who raised the present fine Jacobean building *circa* 1610. The inventory of the 'goodes and chattels of Walter Jones then in the house at his death, 1633,' is of great interest, and both house and furnishing remain in a strangely perfect state.

Water-Eaton is an unusually complete Jacobean manor-house by the side of the Cherwell, with its great walled courtyard, entrance-gate, detached wings, and chapel all perfect. The chapel (1610) is as great an architectural puzzle as Wadham, being apparently of early Perpendicular work. Lord Lovelace had his home here through the Civil Wars, and here his wife was one day seized by a raiding-party of Parliamentarians. They harnessed Lord Lovelace's horses in his state coach, drove off with his lady on the road to Banbury, and after going some ten miles turned her out on the roadside to foot it home as best she could.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CIVIL WAR.

DURING the period of the Civil War Oxford and Oxfordshire played a more important rôle in history than ever fell to their lot before, or has fallen to it since. The county was the theatre of continual fighting—at Edgehill, round the great Castle of Banbury, at Cropredy and Chalgrove, and in a host of other skirmishes; and the city of Oxford was the Royalist capital and the King's residence until all was over.

It is probable that the idea of organized resistance in arms to the King first took definite shape in those meetings of the malcontents which were held in Lord Saye's castle-house of Broughton, about three miles from Banbury. Lord Saye and Sele was himself, as is well known, one of the leading figures on the Parliamentary side, an 'oracle of the Puritans,' and a very 'Godfather of the Party.' He was the son of Richard Baron Saye and Sele, and was born at Broughton in 1582. In 1612 he succeeded his father in the barony, and in 1624 was created Viscount by James I.

In 1640 and 1641 there were constant meetings in Broughton Castle, at which Hampden, Pym, St. John, the younger Vane, Nathaniel Fiennes (Lord Saye's son), and the Lords Brook, Holland, Bedford, Essex, and Warwick, were present.

Broughton Castle stands to-day exactly as it stood at the time of these meetings, except, perhaps, that the long low line of ivied curtain wall between the gatehouse and the castle has been a little battered by the cannon of the Civil War. It scarcely deserves its title of castle, for, save the broad moat which surrounds it with a girdle of water-lilies, it never boasted any very serious means of defence. But for all that it is well worth a pilgrimage, for there is not a more beautiful nor a more perfectly-preserved house of its size in England.

At the top of a projecting corner at the south-west is a small, low room, with three outer walls, and a staircase communicating direct with the grounds. This 'council chamber' is said to be the place where the plot was hatched, and the darkness of night and the private stairs gave ready ingress or egress to the conspirators. 'When they were of a complete number,' says Anthony Wood, 'there would be great noises and talkings heard among them, to the admiration of those who lived in the house, yet could they never discover my lord's companions.' Popular fancy, which delights in such mysteries, has added to the tale an underground passage, with a secret entrance in some caves in a hillside called Bretch, about a mile from Broughton.

Roundhead Broughton found a set-off just across the Oxfordshire frontier, in Cavalier Compton-Winyate, the seat of that devoted Royalist, the Earl of Northampton. But the country round Banbury was, on the whole, vigorously Parliamentarian in its sympathies, and the Puritan spirit was much fostered by the heart-searching eloquence of certain neighbouring divines. Among these were John Dod, Rector of Hanwell, and his successor, Robert Harris. Dod's religious works had a vast popularity, but most valued were his 'Sayings,' which, printed on a broadsheet, adorned the walls of Oxford cottages for more than a century after he was dead and gone.

In the early part of 1642 the crisis was reached, and it was generally felt that no arbitrament except that of arms was now possible. In the spring the Parliament issued their ordinance commanding Lieutenants of counties to arm the militia; and the King replied with his 'commission of array.' Thus there were in each district two recruiting centres—one for the King, the other for the Parliament. Lord Saye was the Parliament's nominee for Oxfordshire, and the Earl of Northampton acted for the King in Northamptonshire. As the summer wore on, there were troops everywhere on the move; either side tried to possess itself of the most important places; there were free fights between excited partisans in towns, and some skirmishing in outlying districts, in which the first blood was shed.

In the twilight of those long summer days the wondering country people heard the Cavalier levies marching through the Oxfordshire lanes to the refrain of 'Troop along, troop along,' and as night fell on a sultry August Sunday some Cavalier troopers came roistering into Hanwell, and turned Minister Harris and his family out of the Rectory. The poor man got back again to his house afterwards, and continued to give his parish the benefit of two sermons a Sunday; but he was sore let

and hindered in the war time by having constantly to give free quarters to Royalist troops, and by the godless ways of his visitors. Once they were so 'outrageously blasphemous' that on the Sabbath he was moved to take James v. 12* for his text, which so 'nettled' some of them that with horrible imprecations they vowed to shoot the preacher if he ever handled that text again. Nothing daunted, Harris preached next time on the same text, but, though a soldier 'fumbled about the lock of his carbine,' nothing more seems to have come of it.

In the autumn of 1642 the war was well begun. The north of Oxfordshire, of which Banbury was the centre, was entirely disaffected; Broughton and Banbury were in the hands of Lord Saye and Sele; the great castles of Warwick and Northampton were also held for the Parliament; and their troops garrisoned Brackley and Buckingham. The Earl of Northampton's house of Compton Winyate was all that the King could count on thereabouts.

Oxford itself—or, at any rate, the University—was devotedly loyal, and after it became the King's headquarters a strong circle of Royalist defences was drawn about it. Woodstock Palace, Boarstall Castle, Bletchingdon and Gaunt Houses, were all held for the King, and Cavalier soldiers were posted at Abingdon and on that grassy eminence on the Bucks border known as the Brill.†

Further south, Wallingford Castle and the Blunts' house of Mapledurham were loyal; but the whole of the Chiltern district with the little town of Chinnor were under Hampden's influence. In the extreme south, Henley and Reading were in the hands of the Parliament, and Royalist Greenlands was watched by Parliamentarian Fawley and Phillis Court.‡

The troops on both sides were at first miserably equipped. 'In the dearth of all the ordinary implements of war, arms and

* 'But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.'

† Brill is a very remarkable site, and struck Stukeley, who has a note on it: 'We ascended Bury Hill, a village upon the highest-topped mountain in the country. It is vulgarly called the Brill, as Mr. Camden takes notice. This has a vast prospect over Bernwood, Otmoor, and the whole country, bounded only by the superior Chiltern, seven miles off. At the top of the Brill by the church I saw parcels of the old Roman camp, which has been modernized with additional bastions in the civil wars.'

‡ A Parliamentary correspondent says that the 'King's quarters are: Bicester, Brackley, Brill, Buckingham, Chippingworth, Hadenham, Islip, Somerton, Stratton-Audley, Thame, and other villages. Parliament quarters: Aylesbury, Amersham, Bierton, Chesham, Elsborough, Etherop, Hartwell, Layton, Lee, Missenden, Newport, Stoke, St. Leonard's, Wadsden, Wendover, Winge, and other villages.'

accoutrements of the most grotesque fashion now left the walls, where from the times of the civil wars of the Two Roses they had hung as hereditary trophies in the manor-houses, the churches, and the cottages of the yeomen. In the returns of arms, particularly of the Northern parts, at the first outbreak the long-bow, the brown-bill, and the cross-bow resumed their place among the equipments of a man-at-arms.' But this was bettered as time went on, and the stores in the magazines of Plymouth and the Tower, of Hull and Newcastle, got distributed among the Parliament men, and arms were brought from France to the Cavaliers. The territorial lords who raised forces for the Parliament put their men as far as they could into their own livery colours, and Lord Saye's 'Blue-coats,' Hampden's 'Green-coats,' and Lord Brooks' 'Purple-coats,' all played important parts on the Oxfordshire stage.

It was in October, 1642, that the King, who had been recruiting his forces at Shrewsbury, found himself sufficiently strong to begin his march on London. He moved eastward, and on a Saturday night, October 22, his army was on the confines of Oxfordshire. Essex had been ordered by the Parliament to prevent Charles from reaching London, and he, too, was marching eastward after the King with the intention of outflanking him, and interposing for the defence of the Metropolis. Neither army was aware of the exact position of the other, when Charles went to sleep that Saturday night at Mr. Toby Chauncy's house of Edgcot, five miles from Banbury. He had with him his two sons—Charles Prince of Wales, and James Duke of York.

In the afternoon, so runs the story, as he came near Edgcot, he saw a Mr. Shuckburgh amusing himself with a pack of hounds, and asked 'who it was who could hunt so merrily when his Sovereign was going to fight for his crown.' Mr. Shuckburgh was presented to him, was prevailed on to leave his sport and raise his tenantry, joined the royal army with a little troop of horse the very next morning, and was 'knighted by his Majesty on the battlefield of Edgehill.'

Prince Rupert, who commanded the rear, lay behind the King's main army at Lord Spencer's House at Wormleighton. In the middle of the Saturday night he got news of the enemy, and sent an express, who reached the King at Edgcot at three o'clock on Sunday morning, and warned him that Essex' troops were encamped for the night at Kineton, only seven miles distant.

A hurried council of war decided that the enemy should be engaged; and so the royal forces turned back a few miles, and took up a position on the line of Edgehill, which commanded the

Parliament forces as they lay encamped in the plain below. Edgehill, it will be recollected, is the edge of the Oxfordshire tableland, the old Dobunian frontier-line* looking right away across the plains of Warwickshire into Hereford and Worcester beyond. The King's army wound its way in the very early morning through Mollington and Warmington, Charles wearing a suit of silver armour, with a black velvet surcoat and the collar of the George. Some of Rupert's horsemen were on the edge of the hill by eight in the morning, and their outlines against the sky were perhaps the first warning to Essex that an engagement was imminent. The foot only came into place some hours later, and an exceedingly strong position was taken up along the brow of the hill, with the King's tent and standard in the middle. In the centre were the infantry, and on either wing the horse; the royal forces were the stronger numerically.

It would be out of place here to attempt any detailed description of the battle, which must be sought in a general history, or to narrate how Rupert's eagerness prevailed over Lindsey's caution, and induced the royal forces to leave their strong position and engage in the plain below. At mid-day the Puritan preachers could be seen going up and down in front of the Parliament ranks praying and encouraging the men with their exhortations; but brave Lindsey's well-known prayer was more soldierly. 'Lord,' he is reputed to have said, 'Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me.—March on, boys.'

It was two o'clock when the action began. Rupert, whom the country people called Robert, swept all before him with a furious cavalry charge on the right wing; he chased the flying Parliament men right up to Kineton, and then fell to plundering the baggage-carts which lay there. Meanwhile, the centre with Essex' body-guard had rallied, and the King was so hard pressed that his standard was taken and his person in actual danger. A warning of what was happening reached Rupert, and he had to cut his way out of Kineton through the rallying enemy, and found the Parliament men trying to carry the Royalist position at a point still known as Bullet Hill. But the gathering darkness put an end to the fight, and left both sides in a more or less crippled condition to claim a doubtful victory.

The place is still instinct with memories of the fight, and, though now planted and enclosed, the position can easily be traced with 'Battledon' and 'Thistledon' farms, round which the main battle raged; 'Prince Rupert's Headland' at Kineton,

* P. 12, *ante*.

where he rallied his men against the enemy gathering in his rear; the lonely house, called the Sun Rising (then an inn), which marked the extension of the King's left wing; and Bullet Hill, where the greatest carnage happened in the dusk of the evening. It is probable that nearly a thousand men met their fate at Edgehill. Among them were that gallant Parliamentarian, young Essex; and stout old Lindsey, who got a bullet in the thigh. Sir Edmund Verney, the King's standard-bearer, was killed, and his body never recovered.

Late on the Sunday night some Parliament men climbed the beacon-hill at Burton Dasset and lit a fire on the old stone beacon-turret that still stands there. It is said that watchers at Ivinghoe, in Buckinghamshire, forty miles away, caught the twinkling signal, and passed it on to Harrow-on-the-Hill, and so to London.

The night was very clear, and a bitter frost set in later on, which added to the misery of those that lay wounded on the field. Clarendon has strange tales of some that were saved because the cold congealed the ebbing blood, but many no doubt perished, that might have survived in less rigorous weather.

On that Sunday Rector Harris gave his two customary sermons at Hanwell, only a few miles away, and 'took it for a great mercy that he heard not the least noise of the battel till the publick work of the day was over, nor could he believe the report of a fight till a souldier, besmeared with blood and powder, came to witness it.' Richard Baxter, too, was preaching at Alcester on 'those words, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence," little knowing what was doing at Edgehill.' 'My voice hindered me,' he says, 'but the auditors heard the cannon. That night was passed by us in sad watching with the noise of fugitive troops; the next day (such spectacles being rare and sad) Mr. Clark and I rode to the field to view what was done, where we saw the dead bodies of Englishmen slain by one another.'

It was indeed a sight to leave a lasting impression on the imagination, and it is small wonder to find that the country folk considered Edgehill, with its heaps of dead lying buried in hastily-dug trenches, a haunted spot. There were wild tales of shepherds and lonely travellers on the next Christmas Eve, hearing the clash of arms and shouting of men and booming of cannon in the midnight air, and fancying they saw troops of spectres fighting over again their fratricidal battle in the clouds. Some even recognised lost Sir Edmund Verney among those ghostly forms, and it is said that word of the apparition was brought to the King at

Oxford, and that he sent some of his officers to inquire into the truth of the matter.

On the Monday after the battle the armies remained facing each other all day, but at sundown Essex retreated on Warwick, and the King to his old quarters at Edgcot. Both forces must have been more crippled than they would allow, for it is otherwise impossible to explain why Charles did not march direct on London, or Essex on Oxford. The Royalists spent a few days in taking Broughton and Banbury. Broughton was of comparatively small importance, and offered no serious resistance; but the strength of Banbury Castle was very great, as after-events showed. Yet it was delivered by the Governor (Nathaniel Fiennes) almost at the first summons, and proved henceforth a terrible thorn in the side of the Parliament to the very close of the war. There were scenes of pillage and disorder when the Royalists came into possession of 'malignant' Banbury. The Mayor of Banbury showed Rupert a guarantee under the King's seal that the town should not be plundered, but the Prince tossed it lightly aside. He had been trained too long in the Continental school to feel any scruples, and with a contemptuous 'My uncle little knows what belongs to the warres' he set his men to pillage again. Banbury surrendered on the Thursday (October 27); on the Friday Charles marched to Woodstock, and on the Saturday to Oxford.

From that time Oxford became the seat of Royalist government and the asylum of Charles's refugee Court. The King knew the place well. As a boy he had been often at Woodstock with his father on hunting visits; and at Oxford had sat the first ill-omened and discordant Parliament (the 'Parlamentum vanum') of his reign. That was in 1625, when an outbreak of the plague had driven Lords and Commons away from London. Then the Privy Council ordered the colleges to be cleared for the reception of the Court and the members of Parliament, and the King was housed at Christ Church. He visited also Woodstock and Rycote, from which latter a proclamation was dated July 31, 1625. Later on he had paid official visits to Oxford in 1629 and 1636. On both occasions the usual routine of speeches, disputations, and interludes was punctually gone through, but the centre of attraction in 1636 was the new building at St. John's, where Laud's munificence contributed the funds, and Inigo Jones designed the quadrangle and part of the picturesque garden front. The greenish marble of the cloister pillars came from Bletchingdon, where Juxon had discovered a quarry when hunting; and Fanelli's bronze statues of Charles and his Queen still crown the classic

pillars. Laud entertained the royal party at a banquet in the library. 'The King, the Queen, and Prince Elector dined at a table which stood cross at the upper end; and Prince Rupert, with all the lords and ladies present, which were very many, dined at a long table in the same room.' Baked meats in the shape of Archbishops, Bishops, doctors, etc., much tickled the fancy of the company, and later on, with windows shut and lamps lit, George Wilde's play of 'Love's Hospital' was performed. It 'was merry and without offence,' and acted entirely by members of the college. Afterwards a novelty was added to the programme in the shape of a visit to Mr. Thomas Bushell's 'waterworks' at Eustone. The waterworks* were a series of grottos, rocks, ponds, and islands, interspersed with fountains, and permeated by pipes so contrived as 'sportively to wet' the unwary spectator on occasion. There was a banqueting-hall, and in one pool an artificial spaniel chased an artificial duck, with all of which the Queen was so gratified that she graciously allowed a rock over which a cascade fell to be called, after her, 'Henrietta.'

After Charles entered Oxford in the autumn of 1642, energetic measures were taken for the defence of the place, and that change began which reduced a University for some years to little more than a great barracks, so completely did the toga yield to arms. Oxford had already had some foretaste of the coming fight. Sir John Byron had paid it a flying visit with some Cavalier troops, but left on hearing of Lord Saye's approach in considerable force.

Lord Saye was there with his men for a few days in September, 1642. He made some inquiries as to disaffection to the Parliament, and carried off with him a trunk full of Dr. Samuel Fell's plate, and also the silver of Christ Church. The plate of the other colleges he rather weakly left, with the stipulation that it should be forthcoming if the Parliament demanded it. He had some Popish books and pictures publicly burnt, and the Parliament men 'much admired' the idolatry they saw in Christ Church, 'a certaine Scot among them marvayling howe the schollers could goe to their bukes for those painted idolatrous wyndowes.' At the end of the month he moved off northward, and his men, complaining that they 'had not been so well entertayned here at Oxford as they expected,' fired off their pistols as they marched away up the High Street, and shattered the heads of

* Described with infinite gusto by Plot. Some unimportant traces of the waterworks remain by the side of the road from Woodstock to Chipping Norton, at the back of an inn called the Harrow, and the place is still known as the Old Waterworks or the Henrietta Waterworks.

the Virgin and Child over the door of St. Mary's, and the image of our Saviour at All Souls' Gate. They would have done more damage but for the urgent remonstrance of Mr. Alderman Nixon and others of the townsmen.

There was a burst of enthusiasm for the King in the University, and if the loyalty of the town was a little dubious at first, it soon became more demonstrative after the presence of the Cavaliers in overwhelming force overawed any disaffection. A line of earthworks (designed by one Rallingson*) was drawn about the town, and was especially strong on the north. The old city walls, wherever they stood, were made as serviceable as might be; and the streams were utilized where possible for purposes of defence. The disused water-courses on the south of the city were once more opened, and a cut was made at St. Clement's, and a dam built in Merton Meadows to divert the Cherwell and flood Christ Church Meadows if occasion required.

On the east, all the trees and brushwood were cut down in the direction of Headington, Bartholomew's Grove was clean swept away, and many outlying houses in St. Clement's were levelled, so that the enemy might not find shelter in approaching the city from that side. A new timber gate was set up on Magdalen Bridge, flanked by two pieces of ordnance; and some loads of stones taken up to the top of Magdalen Tower 'to flinge downe uppon the enemie at their entrance.'

But the most important defences were on the north, where a great earthwork† was raised. The part by St. Giles's Church was to be done by the town, that by St. John's College walks by the county, and the '*moles* in the Newe Parkes' by the scholars. The University bellman went about the town citing town and gown to the works. All residents in halls or colleges between the ages of sixteen and sixty were to dig in the trenches one day a week, or to pay 12d. for each default; and the King himself used to walk round to inspect progress, and one day finding there only 12, where there should have been 122, 'his majestie then tooke notice, and told them of it himself in the field.'

Even before the arrival of the King there had been a great deal of martial ardour in Oxford. Dr. Pinke, of New College (acting Vice-Chancellor), called before him all the privileged men to 'have a view of their armes.' They came with their servants, and a great many scholars also appeared arrayed with any arms,

* He was a B.A. of Queen's, but was given his Master's degree on Charles's request, as a reward for his engineering services.

† Some traces of these works may still be seen in the Warden's gardens at Wadham College.

old or modern, that they could lay hands on. Anthony Wood's father sent a servant with 'a helmet, back and breast piece, a pyke, and musquet,' and there was much ado to keep Thomas Wood (ætat. 18), student of Christ Church, from figuring with these appurtenances himself. Anthony Wood was then a boy of ten years old, at the choir school in New College Cloisters, and as Dr. Pinke was training his scholar-soldiers out of a window in New College Quad, 'there was no holding of the school-boyes in their school' from seeing and following them. Anthony 'remembered well' that some of his schoolmates were 'so besotted with the activitie and gayitie of the yong scholars, that they could never be brought to their books againe.'

There was some drilling done in the quadrangles of New and Christ Church, but the favourite exercise grounds, where manœuvres were carried out on a larger scale, were the Port Meadow and the New Parks. The colleges—or, at any rate, all the best rooms—were given up to the King's retinue and to the soldiers, and most of the older and more serious-minded members of the University retired to their own homes. Of the younger and fiery spirits, a great many remained at Oxford and adopted the dress and habits of the soldiery. Anthony Wood has sad tales of the debauched manners of the scholars, and the guard-houses at Rewley saw the young men tippling the nights away and making the place ring again with roistering songs that the virtuous historian thinks it inexpedient to set down. Oxford was made the capital of the King's party, and by degrees lost all but the semblance of a University, and became a garrison town. The King himself took up his quarters at Christ Church, occupying the same chambers that had housed him on previous occasions. When he summoned a Parliament at Oxford in January, 1644, the Lords* were located in the upper part of the Schools, and the Commons in the Convocation House. The Law Courts also were moved to Oxford—Court of Requests to the Natural Philosophy School, and Chancery to the New Convocation House—and so the Parliament in London had to make a new seal.

New College cloister and tower were made the depot for arms and ammunition, and the fulling and corn mills at Osney were now used for making gunpowder. The Law and Logic Schools became corn-stores; the victualling department was established in the Guildhall. The master tailors sat in the Music and Astronomy Schools, where they cut out thousands of uniforms,

* The majority of the Lords were present, and about one-third of the House of Commons.

which were sent out to cottagers in the neighbouring villages to be made up. The Mint was in New Inn Hall.

Early in 1643 the plate of all the colleges was requisitioned by the King and coined in New Inn. A list of the spoil was kept, in order that the King might restore it when the tide turned. Five shillings an ounce was to be paid some day for the plain silver, and five and sixpence for the gilt; but it is needless to say that no repayment was ever made.* The silver of private persons also found its way to the same melting-pot, and 'the plate which had been given to A. Wood at his christning by his godfathers and godmother, which was considerable, was carried by his majestie's command to the mint at Newe Inne, and there turned into money to pay his majestie's armies.'

Some of the New Inn money was of very fine execution, notably a piece called the *Oxford crown*.

While there was a royal mint for the silver, there was a royal foundry for cannon. In 1634 the Tower of Deddington had fallen; and now the King, in 1643, learning that 'by the fall of your steeple the bells' are made unserviceable for you till that shall be rebuilt, and they are new founded,' requisitions the metal 'as fit for present use,' and so Deddington bells, broken or whole, were carried off to 'our Magazine in New College.'†

Ann Harrison (afterwards Lady Fanshawe) tells how she and her sister joined her father at Oxford in 1643. 'We that had till

* The list given by Bliss is:

	lb.	oz.	dwt.
Christ Church	172	3	14
Jesus	86	11	5
Oriel	82	0	19
Queen's	193	3	1
Lincoln	47	2	5
University	61	6	5
Brasenose	121	2	15
Magdalen	296	6	15
All Souls	253	1	19
Balliol	41	4	0
Merton	79	11	10
Trinity	174	7	10
Exeter	246	5	1
Total	1,856	6	19

New College is not mentioned, nor is it known what became of its plate, though tradition says it was sunk for safety (and afterwards lost) in the depths of the college house-of-easement, a building which moved Plot's wonder, as being 'vast and stupendious.' Corpus sent in just after the list was made, Wadham gave 123 lb. 5 oz. 15 dwt., and St. John's paid £800 at first, in lieu of their plate, but eventually gave it all in 1644. Pembroke seems to have had no plate to give.

† An excellent picture of Oxford at this time is given in Mr. Shorthouse's novel 'John Inglesant.'

that hour lived in great plenty and great order,' she says, 'found ourselves like fishes out of the water, and the scene so changed, that we knew not at all how to act any part but obedience, for from as good a house as any gentleman of England had, we came to a baker's house in an obscure street; and from rooms well furnished to lie in a very bad bed in a garret, to one dish of meat and that not the best ordered, no money for we were as poor as Job, nor clothes more than a man or two brought in their cloak-bags. We had the perpetual discourse of losing and gaining towns and men: at the windows the sad spectacle of war, sometimes plague, sometimes sickness of other kind by reason of so many people being packed together, as I believe there never was before of that quality: always in want, yet I must needs say that most bore it with a martyr-like cheerfulness.'*

Yet Lady Fanshawe never saw the worst, for she left Oxford before Naseby was fought, and before the dreary winter of 1645 set in, when there was little hope left indeed to buoy up the spirits of the Royalists.

Oxford was put under martial law, and a great gibbet erected beside the new conduit at Carfax; while on a wooden horse opposite the Guildhall deserters and refractory soldiers were set astride for punishment. There were strange scenes in the streets, such as when droves of prisoners were brought in after some Royalist victory, to be lodged in the castle or in the churches as convenient gaols; or when the body of Lord D'Aubigny, who received a fatal wound at Edgehill, was carried up the High Street on a chariot of black velvet drawn by six horses, and buried with '3 great voleys of shott' and all the pomp of war in the cathedral at Christ Church.

One May morning, too, Colonel Windebank was by sentence of court-martial shot against the wall of Merton College for a too facile surrender of Bletchingdon House. The surrender came about in this wise: 'On the morning of Wednesday, the 23rd of April, 1644, a dispatch was sent from the Committee of both kingdoms to Cromwell,' the now famous General of Horse, ordering him instantly to take the field, and to stop a convoy which had been sent by Prince Rupert to assist the King in his passage from Oxford to Worcester. Cromwell then fixed the rendezvous of his troops at Watlington. From thence he sent Major-General Browne forward to obtain information about the starting of the convoy, while he with the main force followed more slowly to Wheatley. Falling in with some old Oxford scholars, probably

* Lady Fanshawe's 'Memoirs,' p. 35.

taking their 'constitutional,' he ascertained that the departure of the convoy was imminent, but learning from other sources that the Earl of Northampton's regiment was at Islip Bridge, a few miles north of Oxford, he hurried off a 'forlorn hope' to surprise this regiment. But when, after a march of more than twenty-five miles in that day, the main body came up, it was found that through some error the Royalists had received warning, and were gone. Cromwell and his troops remained that night at Islip, and the next morning, Thursday, April 24, the Royalists, now increased to three regiments, fell suddenly upon him. But the discipline of his men was superior to surprise. A single troop charged, and the King's forces soon took to flight, vigorously pursued by Cromwell's men, some flying to Oxford, others to Woodstock, and a considerable number to Bletchingdon. There they found refuge in a fortified house belonging to Sir Thomas Coghill, and kept by a garrison of 200 men under Colonel Windebank. Cromwell summoned the latter to surrender, and after haggling and bargaining till midnight Windebank received permission to depart, leaving arms, ammunition, and horses. These spoils were sent off next day to Aylesbury, and after garrisoning Bletchingdon House for the Parliament, Cromwell marched to Middleton Stoney, on his way to Witney. There is a despatch of Cromwell dated from Bletchingdon April 25, 1644, reporting his success, and the capture of 200 prisoners, arms, ammunition, and 500 horses. 'God's mercy appears in this also,' he writes, 'that I did much doubt the storming of the house, it being strong and well manned and I having few dragoons, and this being not my business—and yet we got it.' It is said that Colonel Windebank was but lately married, and was overborne by the entreaties of his young wife and other ladies in the house, who were frightened at Comwell's name. Another tale reports that when Windebank refused to surrender, Cromwell called out, 'Fall on! fall on, foot!' when, in truth, there were no foot there. In any case, it was a sorry business, and Windebank paid the penalty for his cowardice or his lack of judgment with his life.

Poor Colonel Swayne met his death at Oxford in another way. 'He was slayne by his boy teaching him to use his armes. He bid his boy aime at him (thinking the gun had not been charged) which he did too well.' There is another story of Sir Charles Blount, of Mapledurham, who was shot dead by a sentry at the North Gate (June 1, 1644) because he failed to give the watchword correctly, or advanced after the sentry had bid him stand.

There was an outbreak of plague in 1643, and a great fire in 1644, and the mortality even among those of the highest degree

was very severe. Among the many funeral records of the time in Oxford* may be mentioned a touching epitaph in Merton College Chapel to the two young children of Sir Richard Spencer, who died 'temporibus iniquissimi belli,' and an inscription in North Hinksey Church to William Finmore, Fellow of St. John's, recording how 'when loyalty and y^e^ church fainted in 1646, he lay down and died.'

In July, 1643, Queen Henrietta came into Oxford escorted by Charles. He had gone out to meet her as far as the ominous field of Edgehill, and enough of the scarce silver was found to strike a medal commemorating this meeting, with their two royal figures at full length, and a python transfixed lying at their feet. Henrietta was housed in the Warden's lodging of Merton College. She occupied the room still known as the Queen's Room, with the drawing-room adjoining; and her lodging was connected with Christ Church by a private way, made at the back through the gardens and Merton Grove. 'The King was constantly with her, probably finding Merton a pleasant retreat from the bustle of Christ Church, and doubtless many interesting reunions took place there of which history is silent.'†

After the Queen's arrival there was a good deal of gaiety in the Court at Oxford. There were theatricals in the college halls, and open-air interludes and acting on fine summer days in the college gardens. A brave show of royalty was kept up; the Queen held receptions, and Charles interviewed envoys and deputations at Christ Church. When there was no immediate alarm from the presence of the enemy, there were pleasant picnics or hunting excursions in the neighbourhood. It was while supping at Woodstock on Sunday, June 2, 1644, after killing two bucks in the chase, that Charles got news of Waller's approach,

* In 1674 Dr. Bathurst, President of Trinity and Vice-Chancellor, gave £300 to repave the chancel of St. Mary's with black and white marble. Mr. Jackson thinks the disrepair of the floor at that time might have been due to the large number of Royalist burials which are recorded to have taken place in the chancel. Wood mentions a monument to Edward Feilding at the east end of the choir, which the Olivarians took away on account of its inscription:

'Edvardus Feilding qui adversus Dei Hostes ecclesiæ Regis legum et bonorum omnium fortiter ac fideliter se gesserit in præliis

KEINTONIENSI
BRAINFORDIENSI
ROUNDWAIDOWNENSI
NEUBURIENSI

Quinque tandem acceptis vulneribus 20 die Sept. An. Dom. 1643 (meriti oppressus pondere an sanguinis inopia fractus futura est quæstio) non sine comuni luctu fato succubuit suo.'

† Brodrick, 'Memorials of Merton College.'

and had to return hastily to Oxford. The King also played tennis at Mr. Edward's court in Oxford,* and among other matters in which he was interested are mentioned some excavations in the ruined cemetery of the Black Friars, where a lead case as big as a man's head was found, and on being opened in the King's sight disclosed a human heart still looking 'verie fresh.'

Among all her troubles Ann Harrison found scope to exercise her charms, and one spring day went out to the little church of Wolvercot, two miles from Oxford, and was there married to Sir Richard Fanshawe. There was some fine singing and music in the college chapels, and the ladies were fond of attending the services. Trinity Chapel was the favourite resort, but the behaviour of the fair worshippers at times left something to be desired. 'Our grove,' writes Aubrey of Trinity, 'was the *Daphne* for the ladies and their gallants to walk in, and many times my Lady Isabella Thynne would make her entrys with a theorbo or lute played before her. She was most beautiful, humble, charitable, etc., but she could not subdue one thing. I remember one time this lady and fine M^ris^ Fenshawe (she was wont and my Lady Thynne to come to our chapell, mornings, halfe dressed like angells) would have a frolick to make a visit to the President.† The old D^r^ quickly perceived that they came to abuse him; he addressed his discourse to M^ris^ Fenshawe, saying, "Madam, your husband and father I bred up here, and I knew your grandfather: I know you to be a gentlewoman, I will not say you are a whore, but gett you gone for a very woman." The dissoluteness of the times, as I have sayd, grieving the good old D^r^, his days were shortned and dyed in July 1643.'

From the time that the King made Oxford his headquarters, fighting in the neighbourhood was incessant. At the commencement of the war the Royalists had a circle of outpost-positions round the city. On the north in the immediate neighbourhood, between Oxford and Wolvercot, were encamped the bulk of the infantry; on the east Brill and Thame were garrisoned, and the strong castle of Boarstall was held by Colonel Gerrard for the King; on the south-west Rupert made Abingdon the headquarters of his cavalry; and on the south Colonel Blagge occupied Wallingford. In the extreme north of the county stood the royal stronghold of Banbury, isolated in the midst of a Parliamentary district. Throughout the war this great castle was a terrible thorn in the side of the Roundheads, being a collecting-house for Oxford from

* There was also a court at Woodstock.

† Dr. Ralph Kettell.

which the disaffected country round it was harried and supplies constantly sent in for the King.

As the war went on some of these positions were captured, and the Parliamentarian circle drawn closer about Oxford. Brill was the first to go, and then Thame, and in the spring of 1644 Abingdon had to be evacuated on the approach of Essex. The castles held out to the end. Wallingford was the very last place in that part of the country that Charles could call his own; it surrendered July 27, 1646, but not till Woodstock had been evacuated on April 26, Banbury on May 8, Boarstall on June 10, and Oxford itself on June 24, of that same year.

The year 1643 opened with fair prospects for the King's party, and one factor of their success was the restless energy of Rupert. Using Oxford as a base, his cavalry 'beat up' the Parliamentary quarters round about. Starting generally at dead of night, he was on the Roundheads at early dawn before they were aware. Now it was Cirencester, now Thame, now Aylesbury or Essex' quarters at Reading, that had to stand his fiery onslaught.

It was on the morning of June 18, 1643, that John Hampden, from his home in the Chilterns, saw the Cavalier horse engaged in one of these forays far in the plain below him. Mustering his 'Green-coats' about him (the militia he had himself trained), he advanced through the standing corn to intercept the Royalists, and the fight of Chalgrove Field took place. Its chief claim to notoriety is that there the great Parliamentarian received his death-wound.

The engagement had scarcely begun, when a brace of carbine balls struck his left shoulder,* and his men were cut to pieces or routed by the superior numbers of the enemy. The wounded Hampden escaped from the field and tried to make his way to Pyrton Manor,† close by, the home of his first wife. But finding his way barred by the enemy, he turned aside and rode for Thame. At Hasely he came to a brook, 'where, as in his great agony and weakness it would have been impossible for him if he had alighted to have remounted, summoning all his remaining strength, he made his horse leap across the brook. With his head hanging down, and his hands resting upon his horse's neck, he at length arrived at the house of Ezekiel Browne in the street of Thame. In the first moments of respite from pain he laboured to condense

* This is the received version; but a rather unnecessary exhumation of the body by Lord Nugent, in 1828, gives colour to the theory that his hand was shattered by the bursting of a pistol which had been twice loaded by a careless servant.

† The beautiful red-brick E-shaped house still stands.

all his dying energies in the work of sending letters of counsel to the Parliament, and this done he devoted his last fleeting hours to his soul. His old friend, Dr. Giles, the Rector of Chinnor, remained by his side and administered the last Sacrament. . . . As he lay in that great agony he was heard to say that "if he had twenty lives all should go this way rather than the Gospel of our salvation should be trampled under foot." . . . On the sixth day, having prayed aloud for his country and commended his soul to God, he departed without any pain at all, as if falling out of a sweet slumber into a deep sleep.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CIVIL WAR AND THE COMMONWEALTH.

DEATH was indeed busy on both sides. Lord Brook was shot in the eye before Lichfield by a bullet fired from the cathedral tower (March 2, 1643), and a few days after brave Northampton fell at Hopton Heath (Sunday, March 19). His horse stumbled in the rabbit burrows, but he fought on foot, 'scorning to take quarter from such base rogues and rebels,' till a halbert cleft his skull from behind.

His young son James, who succeeded him, took command of Banbury. Three days after his father's death, when he was himself laid up with a bullet in the leg, he writes to the widowed Countess:

'DEAR MOTHER,

'On Sunday we got the day of the Rebels, but our losse (especially your Honour's and mine) is not to be expressed. For though it be a general losse to the kingdome, yet it toucheth us nearest. But, Madam, casualties in this world will happen, and in such a cause who would not have ventured both life and fortune? Pray'e, Madam, let this be your comfort, that it was impossible for any to do braver than he did, as appears by their own relation. I sent a trumpeter to know what was become of my Father; hee brought me a letter from Sir John Gell and Sir William Brereton assuring me of my Father's death, making strange demand for his body such as were never heard of before in any warre, as all the Ammunition, Prisoners and Cannon which we had taken. I sent them word backe that their demands were unreasonable and against the Lawes of Armes, but desired them to give free passage to some chirurgeons to embalm him or to let their chirurgeons doe it and I would satisfy them for their paines. Their last answer I have sent in Philip Willoughby's letter, which is that they will neither send the body nor suffer our chirurgeons to come

to embalm it, but will see their own chirurgeons doe it. Their relation is that he was assaulted by many together, and with his owne hand killed the Colonel and others also, but was unhorsed by the multitude, his horse being shot: but his Armour was so good that they could not hurt him till he was downe and had undone his head-peece. Pray'e, Madam, be comforted and think no man could more honourably have ended his life (fighting for his Religion, his King, and his Country) to be partaker of heavenly joies. We must certainely follow him, but can hardly hope for so brave a death. Thus humbly craving your blessing, I shall remaine till death

'Your obedient sonne,

'NORTHAMPTON.

'STAFFORD,
'*March* 22, 164$\frac{2}{3}$.'

On September 20 of the same year the blameless Lord Falkland fell at Newbury. Lord Falkland had through his mother (only child and heiress of Sir Lawrence Tanfield, Chief Baron of Exchequer) inherited both Burford Priory and Great Tew,* in Oxfordshire, but Tew was always his favourite residence. 'His house being within little more than ten miles of Oxford, he contracted familiarity and friendship with the most polite and accurate men of that University (Drs. Sheldon, Morley, Hammond, Mr. Chillingworth, etc.), who found such an immenseness of wit and such a solidity of judgement in him, so infinite a fancy bound in by a most logical ratiocination, such a vast knowledge that he was not ignorant in anything, yet such an excessive humility as if he had known nothing, that they frequently resorted and dwelt with him as in a college situated in a purer air; so that his house was a university in a less volume whither they came not so much for repose as for study, and to examine and refine those grosser propositions which business and consent made current in vulgar conversation.' A handsome if tardy (1885) heraldic monument has been set up to his memory in Tew Church; but though the entry of his burial remains in the parish register, the exact place of his grave is rather doubtful, for the body was brought across from Newbury with difficulty and hurriedly interred by night.

In the spring of 1644 the Parliament decided that vigorous measures should be taken to put an end to the war by the siege

* Great Tew is worth visiting. Though the house has been rebuilt, the grounds are very picturesque with many yews and laurels. Round an elm-tree in the park the ghost of Tanfield is said to drive at midnight in a coach and six. Of romantic Burford mention is made elsewhere.

of Oxford and the capture of the King's person. For this purpose the armies both of Waller and of Essex were strengthened; and ordered to advance to the north of Oxford on different sides of the Thames, effect a junction there, and besiege the city closely. Essex had probably about 15,000 men; and at the end of March, 1644, entered Reading, which the Royalists had evacuated at his approach. On May 26 he took possession of Abingdon, and on the 28th pushed on to Oxford. On the 29th his forces were seen passing through Cowley and over Bullingdon Green. He 'lay facing the city for several hours, while his carriages slipt away behind him.' This gave much alarm in Oxford, and Anthony Wood's mother was moved to send him and his brother Christopher away to Thame out of harm's way, as it was thought the siege was going to begin at once. Essex, however, marched on further, and took up a position about Islip, whilst waiting Waller's arrival. Waller meanwhile was marching up from Abingdon with about 8,500 men through Standlake and Stanton Harcourt. The King spent Sunday, June 2, at Woodstock, and, after killing a couple of bucks in the chase, was at supper when he got news that Waller's forces were encamped about Eynsham. Charles saw that there was no time to lose, and, escorted by his Horse, left Woodstock late on the Sunday night, and arrived at Oxford in the early morning of Monday.

The bulk of the Royalist troops lay all that Monday under the works on the north of Oxford, but some of them made a feint to attack Abingdon, which had the effect of withdrawing Waller a little from his advanced position at Eynsham. But at nightfall, towards nine o'clock, the King mustered about 6,000 men (mostly horse) in Port Meadow, and, leaving his ordnance and colours before the fortifications, marched silently away northward in the summer twilight. He chose a route through the meadows and country by-ways past Wolvercot and Yarnton, and thus actually succeeded in passing unnoticed between the armies of his would-be captors. By dawn Charles had crossed the Evenlode at Handborough Bridge, at breakfast-time he was at Witney. Essex' scouts at daybreak saw the colours still waving under the Oxford fortifications, and reported all well, but the bird had flown.

Waller was the first to get wind of the King's escape, but he had been misled by the feint on Abingdon, and was too far off to do more than send a squadron of horse who harassed the King's rear at Burford, but were easily beaten off. So Charles escaped by a masterly manœuvre, and made his way to Worcester by Burford. The rest of his march in the West is matter of general history, but at the end of the month he was able to retrace his

steps to Oxford. It was as he returned that he came on Waller's forces near Cropredy and the Battle of Cropredy Bridge took place. The fight resolved itself into an obstinate and protracted struggle for the possession of the bridge which crosses the Cherwell. There were many vicissitudes of fortune during the day, but the Royalists had eventually very much the best of it, and Clarendon says that it was this battle that finally broke up Waller's army.

Cropredy Bridge still stands, though much altered, and cannon-balls, armour, and other relics of the fight, have been often found thereabout. Some years ago there was dug up a bugle-shaped whistle and some other trinkets of silver—such 'tokens of the wanton,' perhaps, as Macaulay sings of in 'Naseby.' Most of the dead were buried in trenches in a ploughed field south-east of the bridge, but there are some gravestones to those that fell to be seen in the churchyard.

The fight lasted all Saturday, June 29, but at evening the combatants drew off to their respective positions, and stood in full view of each other the Sunday following. But, as at Edgehill, neither made any further attack, and about six o'clock the King marched off to Deddington* *en route* for Oxford. Waller made no attempt to pursue him; indeed, it is said that over a thousand Roundheads had deserted in the previous night.

On July 19 of the same year (1644) the Parliamentary forces sat down before Banbury Castle, and Colonel John Fiennes directed the siege operations. Young Sir William Compton (brother to the Earl of Northampton) was in command of the castle, and being summoned by a trumpeter of Fiennes' to surrender, returned answer 'that they kept the Castle for his Majestie, and as long as one man was left alive in it, willed them not to expect to have it delivered.'

The town of Banbury had suffered terribly already. The complexion of the place and district was Puritanical, and the garrison of the Royalist castle had naturally little scruple in laying their Roundhead neighbours under heavy exactions. All the country round about was continually raided for supplies for the castle and Oxford, but the unfortunate citizens of Banbury were worst off, because they were the nearest and the easiest prey. Their woes were now immeasurably increased by having the Parliamentary troops quartered on them, and by the havoc which began.

* Charles slept on Sunday night at the old parsonage-house at Deddington, a strange semi-castellated building, now known as the Castle Farm, and reputed haunted.

Fiennes made the church* his headquarters, turning the interior into a magazine and barrack, and planting his heavy ordnance in the churchyard. All day, and every day, desultory firing went on, the castle 'playing' against the church, and the church playing against the castle. The Parliament men had some 34-pounder guns in the churchyard, but were especially proud of 'two great mortars,' which lobbed 'granadoes' of 112 lb. weight into the castle garth. Casualties were numerous; half the houses in the town suffered severely; there was an outbreak of plague, and fires were of everyday occurrence.

Still the castle held out bravely. On Monday, September 23, Fiennes attempted to storm the place where the granadoes had battered a breech in the walls. He had already tried by mining operations to drain the outer moat, but the water broke into his diggings and drowned many of his soldiers.

The attack on the castle lasted all day, but before night fell the attempt had failed, and the besiegers were beaten off with severe loss. Fiennes sent a trumpeter to 'desire the bodies of their dead, which were granted on condition that those which had fallen within pistoll shot of the Castle, should be stript by those of the garrison and delivered naked in the Market Place. All Tuesday the Parliament men spent in solemnizing the burials of their dead with drumms, trumpets and vollies of shot, and now and then a Psalme, wherein Master Fines was distinguished from the rest as having the most funerall voice among them.'

Help came at last to the besieged, and on the approach of the Earl of Northampton (who had been joined by Colonel Gage† from Oxford) in force, the Parliament troops withdrew and the siege was raised. It was none too soon, for in the castle 'were only 2 horses remaining, all the rest had been eaten by the garrison.' Sir William Compton, then only 19, had shown most resolute and watchful courage in the defence: it was said that he had not once gone to bed for 13 weeks.

Anthony Wood draws some graphic pictures of the time. He was twelve years old in 1644, and his mother sent him to Thame with his brother Christopher to be out of harm's way. He went to school at the free grammar-school there that Lord Williams had founded, but boarded in the house of Mr. Thomas Henant,

* A magnificent building of unusual size, wantonly pulled down for private ends in 1790.

† Colonel Gage was Governor of Oxford garrison. He had succeeded as Governor Sir Arthur Aston, who broke his leg by a fall from his horse, and underwent amputation. The King nominated Gage, and the latter was mortally wounded by a musket bullet, January 11, 1645, while trying to blow up Culham Bridge.

Vicar of Thame and kinsman of the Woods. Anthony's studies were not suffered to proceed without interruption. He tells how, on Monday, January 27, 1645, Colonel Blagge, the Governor of Wallingford Castle, who was out on a marauding expedition, was chased through Thame by Colonel Crafford, who commanded the Parliamentary garrison at Aylesbury. 'As A. W. and his fellow sojournours (*i.e.*, the other boarders) were all then at dinner in the parlour, they were alarum'd with their approach: and by that time they could run out of the house into the backside to look over the pale that parts it from the common road, they saw a great number of horsemen posting towards Thame over Crendon Bridge about a stone's cast from their house (being the out and only house on that road before you come into Thame), and in the head of them was Blagge with a bloody face. The number as was then guessed by A. W. and those of the family was 50 or more, and they all rode under the said pale and close to the house. They did not ride in order, but each made shift to be foremost, and one of them riding upon a shelving ground opposite to the dore, his horse slip'd, fell upon one side, and threw the rider (a lusty man) in A. Wood's sight. Colonel Crafford, who was well hors'd and at a pretty distance before his men in pursuite, held a pistol to him, but the trooper crying "Quarter!" the rebels came up, rifled him, and took him and his horse away with them. Crafford rode on without touching him, and ever and anon he would be discharging his pistol at some of the fag-end of Blagge's horse, who rode thro' the west end of Thame, called Priest-end, leading towards Ricot.'

'Another great alarme to the juvenile muses in the Vicaridge House, particularly to A. W.,' happened on Sunday, September 7, 1645, when about break of day Colonel Legge (Governor of Oxford) and Colonel David Walter (of Godstow House, High Sheriff for Oxfordshire) 'beat up' the Parliamentarians quartered in Thame under Colonel Greaves. The Royalists had the best of it, and drove the Roundheads out of the town for the time. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. Some of the Parliament troopers had been billeted in the Vicarage-house, and the day before 'had been progging for venison in Thame Park, I think, and one or two pasties of it were made and newly put in the oven before the cavaliers entered the house. But so it was that none of the said rebels were left at 11 of the clock to eat the said pasties, so their share fell among the school-boyes that were sojournours in the same house.'

Sometimes it was the Royalists who came to the Vicar's house. They came over from Boarstall Castle and lay in wait on the

London Road to intercept provisions coming down to Aylesbury. While some watched on the road, others would continue a whole night together sitting before the Vicarage fire. 'Some of the troopers would discourse with the school-boyes while they were making their exercise in the hall against the next day. Some of them A. W. found to have grammar learning in them, as by the questions they proposed to the boys; and others having been in Oxon knew the relations of A. W. which would make them show kindness to him and his brother. But that which A. W. observ'd was that the vicar and his wife were alwaies more kind to the parl. soldiers or rebells than to the cavaliers. But for the usher David Thomas, a proper stout Welshman, A. W. alwaies took him to be a good loyalist, as indeed he was.'

On June 14, 1645, was fought the Battle of Naseby, and the royal cause never rallied after that terrible disaster. By the autumn of 1645 the war was practically over, and the Royalists who held out in Oxford must have felt that resistance, however protracted, was now hopeless.

It was no doubt a dismal winter in the city. Charles was there with Rupert and Maurice, but the Queen had left the place in the spring of 1644. Death had removed a great many of those who were leading actors when the war began, but Charles had still with him a band of faithful nobles and gentry who stuck gallantly to the cause, though most of their fortunes were now as ruined as their master's. In December the King ordered special forms of prayer to be used in college chapels 'during these bad times.'

The spring of 1646 was devoted by the Parliament to besieging those strongholds which yet held out for the King, and in January the Governor of Oxford ordered every responsible person in the city and University to see that six months' provisions were in store for every person under his charge.

The siege which they feared, however, did not come till five months later, and before it began the King had left the place and given himself up to the Scotch. He escaped from Oxford on April 27, disguised as a servant of John Ashburnham, and attended by the Rev. Mr. Hudson. With the King in the hands of his enemies, further resistance was futile, and the great Royalist castles surrendered one after the other.

The 'brave and ancient manor-house' of Woodstock, after being sadly battered by Rainsborough's and Fleetwood's ordnance, had given in already a month before, on honourable terms. Banbury was surrendered on May 8, as soon as its defenders heard of the King's flight. It had been besieged since January, but Sir William Compton defended on this occasion as bravely as he had

once before, and Colonel Edward Whalley was no nearer taking it at the time of its surrender than he had been when he first sat down before it. Whalley had summoned the place as early as March 18:

'Sir,

'Before I attempt anything upon you, which may occasion the effusion of Christian blood, I thinke it my duty (both to God and the State whose servant I am) to send you a faire and civill summons to prevent it, and therefore demand of you the castle for the use of the Parliament. For you now to stand out (being out of all hopes of ever having Reliefe), it will be but to make yourselves to embrew your hands in your own blood and cause Repentance when it is too late. I expect your answer, and shall be, if you please,

'Your friend to serve you,

'Edw: Whaley.'

Compton's reply was:

'Sir,

'I have received (by your Drum you sent to me) a letter wherein you demand this Castle for the use of the Parliament, to whom I returne this answer, that I shall never be so false to my King as to deliver up the trust I have from him to *Rebels:* I shall therefore desire you to *forbeare any further frivolous summons*, for I thank God I have a *loyall* hart, as I shall make you sensible of in *defence of this place* (by God's assistance) if you make any further attempts upon it. All the *Officers and Souldiers now here with me returne the same resolutions*, rather chosing to lose our lives in the defence of this place than deliver it up without his Majestie's command. I rest yours in what I may.

'W. Compton.'

'His Majestie's command' had now been given, and at nine o'clock on the morning of May 8 Compton marched out of Banbury with 400 men, under the most honourable conditions of war. The castle was found to be exceptionally strong, and well equipped both with munitions of war and with provisions.

Boarstall surrendered on June 10. Anthony Wood's school got a holiday for the occasion, and 'many of the school-boys went thither (4 miles distant) about 8 or 9 of the clock in the morning to see the forme of surrender, the strength of the garrison, and the soldiers of each party. They, and particularly A. W., had instructions given to them before they went, that not one of them should either taste any liquor or eat any provision in the

garrison; and the reason was for feare the royal partie who were to march out thence should mix poyson among the liquor or provision that they should leave there. But as A. W. remembered he could not get into the garrison but stood as hundreds did without the works, where he saw the Governor, Sir William Campion, a little man who, upon some occasion or other, laid flat on the ground on his belly to write a letter, bill, or the form of a pass, or some such thing.'

On May 1, 1646, Fairfax appeared before Oxford, and occupied a strong position on Headington Hill. He flung a temporary bridge across the Cherwell in the Marston meadows, and quartered the bulk of his army on the other side facing the northern lines of the city. But these preparations were not required, for the King had passed the word for surrender, and it was now only a question of arranging terms. Fairfax 'summoned' the city in due form on May 11. Sir Thomas Glemham was Governor of Oxford, and Fairfax's letter was as follows:

'*May* 11.

'SIR,

'I do by these summon you to deliver up the city of Oxford into my hands for the use of the Parliament. I very much desire the preservation of that place, so famous for learning, from ruin which inevitably is like to fall upon it unless you concur. You may have honourable terms for yourself and all within the garrison if you reasonably accept thereof. I desire your answer this day, and remain your servant,

'THO. FAIRFAX.'

Negotiations for surrender were soon under way; and conferences between the delegates of both parties were held in Unton Croke's house in Marston, which is still pointed out as 'Cromwell's Castle.' It was there that the treaty of surrender was finally signed on June 20, in which the Royalists submitted 'to the fate of the kingdom rather than in any way distrusting their own strength.'

The terms of surrender were as easy and as honourable as such terms could be. All their ancient privileges and immunities were secured to University and city; churches were not to be defaced; the ancient constitution of colleges was to be maintained, subject always to the authority of Parliament.

On Wednesday, Midsummer Day, June 24, 1646, the garrison of Oxford, 3,000 strong, 'marched out of the town through a guard of the enemy extending from St. Clement's to Shotover hill.' They enjoyed all the honours of war, and passed through

the lines of Roundheads, with colours flying, drums beating, matches burning, and bullets in bouche. No doubt they bore themselves bravely like the stout soldiers that they were; but there must have been among them many heavy hearts of men who realized at last that the cause they had fought for was lost, of men whose homes and fortunes were alike ruined, and who were marching they knew not whither. A drenching rain was falling, and they were in a sorry plight when they reached Thame in the evening. Here a thousand of them laid down their arms, and Anthony Wood went into the town to see them. 'He knew some of their faces, and they his, but he being a boy and having no money could not relieve them or make them drink: yet he talked with them about Oxford, and his relations and acquaintance there; for the doing of which he was check'd when he came home.'

A month later Wallingford, the King's last castle in that neighbourhood, was given up (July 27, 1646); the surrender of Oxford had been 'the concluding act of the Civil war.'

The war over, there was a sad reckoning up of the cost. The country in general had suffered seriously, but the havoc in Oxfordshire was possibly greater than elsewhere, because the county had been so long the theatre of war. Those places had been most wronged which were unfortunate enough to have near them strongholds of both parties. Such was the district round Banbury, which was raided alternately by the Cavaliers from Banbury Castle, and the Roundheads from Northampton. 'The countrey men have a pretty observation which is this. They say they pay contribution on both sides: when Banbury men come to gather their mony, they observe a time when their enemies of Northampton are at home; then come they in, and with a loud cry say, Where are these Roundheads? wee'll kill them all for raysing mony of you, you shall pay to none but us. When Banbury men are gone then comes the other party; Where are the Cavaliers? wee'll kill them all, you shall pay to none but us, we will protect you. But hardly in a year doth the one interrupt the other's collections.' Joshua Sprigge, a Puritan native of Banbury, laments in 1647 that the town of his birth, 'once a great and faire market towne before the late troubles, has now scarce one half standing to gaze on the ruines of the other.'

Thus Thame and that district was harried by Oxford and Boarstall Castle on the King's side, and the Aylesbury garrison on the Parliament's. The Roundheads were no respecters of persons, and could mulct their own supporters on occasion. So some of Essex' men plundered 'one Beale of Haseley (a man much devoted to the Proceedings of the two Houses of Parliament) of

two Horses. Upon complaint made unto the Earle he gives Beale command to attend him at Thame, and there he should have them again. Accordingly accompanied by his Brother he comes to Thame, hoping to have his Horses restored; but being come thither is apprehended and committed to Prison: and his Horse together with that which his Brother rode on are both seized for the Earl's use, nor can either Man or Horse be released unless he will pay down 20 pound in ready mony. Having continued in Prison 4 days, at last his Mother comes to Thame on foot (for fear if she rode she might have been Prisoner for her Horse's sake as her son was) and brings 20 pound. Upon receipt of the Mony his Excellency released him out of his imprisonment, and restored him the two worst Horses of the four, and wisely kept the two best for himself.'

Henley was a Parliamentary garrison, and had near it Phillis Court (Sir Bulstrode Whitelock's house), which was strongly fortified in the Parliament interest. But Henley* suffered much at the hands of the Royalist raiders from Wallingford Castle, and also from the garrison of the neighbouring house of Greenlands, 'which for a little fort was made very strong for the King.' Sir Bulstrode's other neighbouring house of Fawley Court had been wrecked at an early period by Sir John Byron's soldiers, and when the war was over he was anxious to repair it, to disband his men, and resume a peaceable life at Phillis Court. He petitions the Parliament to 'slight' Phillis Court—that is, to remove the fortifications which had been cast up about it. Thus in August, 1646, he writes: 'I had a great number of countrymen, my neighbours, who willingly came in to me upon my warrant with mattocks, shovels and some carts to help in the slighting of the works at Phyllis Court. I provided also store of pick-axes and shovels for my soldiers whom I encouraged to help in this work, allowing to everyone that would work sixpence a day besides their pay, which persuaded them all to work and kept them from idleness. The country paid the men they sent in. In a few days, having many hands, I threw in the breastwork on two sides and made two even side-walks—the one on the side next the Thames, the other on the North side. On the two other sides I caused the bulwarks

* A curious story of the barbarity of the times is preserved. 'A woman at Henley, having taken notice of the unwonted taxations imposed by this Parliament, expressed (yet in civil terms) some dislike thereof: which being made known to the Committee there (August, 1646), she was by them ordered to have her tongue fastened by a nail to the body of a tree by the highway-side on a market day. Which was accordingly done, and a paper in great letters setting forth the heinousness of her fact, fixed on her back to make her the more notorious.'

and lines to be digged down, the grafts (*i.e.*, moats) filled, the drawbridge to be pulled up and all levelled. I sent away the great guns, the granadoes, fireworks and ammunition, whereof there was good store in the fort. I procured pay for my soldiers, and many of them undertook the service in Ireland.'

The quotation has been given in full, because it was no doubt typical of what went on in others of the Oxfordshire houses which had been put in a posture of defence. Some, alas! were beyond all possibility of restoration. David Walter had set fire to his own house at Godstow, and burnt it to the ground lest it should serve as shelter to the 'Rebels.' Governor Legge burnt for a similar reason the new episcopal palace which Bancroft had only finished ten years before at Cuddesdon. At the same time Sir Thomas Gardiner burnt his manor-house in Cuddesdon village, and he was called on a little later to offer a yet greater sacrifice to his loyalty, for both his sons* died fighting for the cause. Many other houses were so battered that they were left untenanted, and so fell into ruin.

In the summer of 1648 the proud castle of Banbury was entirely demolished, and the materials used to repair the ruined buildings in the town. Two thousand pounds was paid to Lord Saye by way of indemnification, the earthworks were levelled, and the moats filled. Boarstall was partially restored and reinhabited for a time by Lady Dynham in 1650; but Wallingford was slighted† and destroyed in 1652.

In October, 1649, the Parliamentarian Commissioners took possession of Woodstock Manor-house. The rambling old building, battered and deserted, must have been gloomy enough in the long evenings of late autumn; and an 'adroit and humorous Royalist named Joe Collins' was struck with the possibilities of the situation. The Commissioners were lodged in the chambers that had once been the King's, and there Mr. Collins and his friends 'played ghosts' at night with such an effect upon uneasy consciences, that the Commissioners were eventually frightened into deserting the place. The story is well known from Sir Walter Scott's 'Woodstock,' and Thomas Widdowes, minister of Woodstock, published a diary of the matter called 'The Just Devil of Woodstock, or a true Narrative of the several Apparitions,

* Henry Gardiner was shot in that skirmish which alarmed the 'juvenile muses' at Thame. He was a 'youth of such high incomparable courage, mix'd with such abundance of modesty and sweetness that wee cannot easily match him, unless with his brave young brother Thomas, which two are now buried both in one grave in the cathedral of Christ Church in Oxon, whither they were brought with much universal sorrow and affection.'

† The earthworks still remain tolerably perfect.

the Frights, and Punishments, inflicted upon the Rumpish Commissioners, etc.' The ingenious Plot in his 'Natural History' minutely details the occurrences, which included apparitions of dogs and bears, throwing about of trenchers, glass, and stones, putting out of lights and tilting up the beds of the terrified Commissioners.

In 1650 Woodstock was sold for the Parliament at the moderate sum of £13,581 10s. 6d. for house and park, £1,500 for lead and other material of the house, £1,133 10s. for the timber, and £1,000 for the deer. In 1651 the manor-house was gutted, and for the most part demolished, though some part remained till Blenheim was built.

The timber in the chase had suffered severely; indeed, there had been terrible destruction of wood throughout Oxfordshire. 'The rich and fertile county' of Camden writing before the war, 'with hills covered with great store of woods,' had been sadly shorn of its glories, and Plot says: 'The hills, 'tis true, before the late unhappy wars were well enough beset with woods, where now 'tis so scarcy that 'tis a common thing to sell it by weight, and not only at Oxford, but at many other places in the northern parts of the shire; where if brought to mercat, it is ordinarily sold for about one shilling the hundred; but if remote from a great town it may be had for seven pence; and thus it is every where but in the Chiltern Country.' Agricultural operations had been brought to a standstill for three years, for men did not care to sow where they knew not who should reap.

Churches had suffered as much as or more than houses. Throughout the war they were found excellently adapted for military exigencies, and were used as prisons, sick-houses, magazines, stables, or barracks,* exactly as was most convenient. Sometimes, as at Banbury, the church itself was made a defensible position. Much of the church plate found its way to the melting-pot. Occasionally, as at Deddington, the bells were cast into cannon. The lead of the roofs offered itself for bullets; even tombs were not secure from outrage, for the Parliament men knocked in the side of Lord William's great altar-tomb at Thame and took out the lead coffin inside for making slugs. But besides the damage incident to the rough usages of war, there was the systematic destruction of fanaticism. The Roundhead had a keen *flair* for idolatry, and considered it a meritorious work enough to shatter effigies and throw the pieces through such

* When some of Waller's troops lay a night (June 6, 1644) in Burford Church, they tore down the banners hanging above the great Tanfield monument, and tied them round their bodies for scarfs.

painted windows as the heroes of the 'Reformation' had spared. In 1659, Anthony Wood, 'taking a ramble' to Banbury, found that of '60 coates of armes that were in the windowes before the warrs began he could then see but 12 or 13. The monuments there were also wofully defaced in the late Civil warr, yet what remained he transcribed.'

The clergy suffered with their churches. In 1643 the Parliament passed an ordinance for sequestrating the estates of 'notorious delinquents,' and at the same time evidence was ordered to be taken as to any ministers who were 'scandalous in doctrine,' or who 'deserted their cures.' Speaker Lenthall, who lived at Burford Priory, was one of a Committee appointed in 1644 for seeing that due effect was given to these ordinances in Bucks, Berks, and Oxfordshire. Some twenty-eight country parsons in Oxfordshire, then, and subsequently, lost their preferments; a number smaller, perhaps, than might have been expected. The ejected incumbents were supposed to receive as a pension from the incomers one-fifth of the revenues of the church; but this remained very generally unpaid, and some of the Royalist clergy were brought to sore straits.

Thus Charles Forbench, Vicar of Sandford and Iffley, was reduced to earn a living as a wood-cutter, while his wife worked on odd jobs for the tailor who let them lodgings. Yet Forbench's spirit was by no means crushed, for after being imprisoned at Woodstock for reading the Common Prayer, 'he said pleasantly, when set at liberty, "If I must not read it, I am resolved I will say it by heart, in spite of all the rogues in England."' The celebrated scholar Thomas Lydiatt,* then Rector of Alkerton, was so plundered by the Parliament men from Compton Winyates that he 'was forced for a quarter of a year to borrow a shirt to shift himself'; and Dr. William Oldys, Rector of Adderbury, was pursued on the highway by Roundhead horsemen, and met his death by a bullet in the back.

Some of the 'ministers' who filled the places of the ejected clergy were apparently anything but reputable characters. Thus instead of Thomas Cole,† Rector of Lower Heyford, 'an army

* 'There mark what ills the scholar's life assail—
Toil, envy, want, the patron and the gaol;
See nations slowly wise and meanly just
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter once again attend,
Hear Lydiatt's life, and Galileo's end.'
JOHNSON: *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

† Cole must himself have been an eccentric man. No less than eleven times between 1630-1637 he has entered *his own* burial in the parish registers of Lower Heyford. *Vide* Blomfield's 'Deanery of Bicester.'

preacher was obtruded upon the parish who went by y^e^ name of Captain Butler. He liv'd altogether at Deddington, 3 miles distant, by w^ch^ means the Parsonage house became ruinous. They say y^e^ reason of his living there was because he kept some vile strumpets about that towne. He came over generally on Sundays, and appeared with his coat and sworde when he was to perform the office of a preacher. He discours'd about "binding Kgs in chaines, such hon^r^ have all his S^ts^." But he was so lewd and vitious, and guilty of so much debauch^y^, that it is s^d^ he destroy'd his wife (who was a comely person) by giving her the French disease; by w^ch^ meanes likewyse he lost his owne life.'

Robert Skinner, Bishop of Oxford, had a taste of the Tower in 1642 for joining in a protest of the Archbishop of York's and ten other Bishops against the validity of the Long Parliament's proceedings. After he was released from his imprisonment he withdrew for a little to his palace of Cuddesdon, but joined the King in Oxford in 1643. In 1644 his palace was burnt, and in 1646 'his name, title, and dignity,' with those of all the other Bishops, were 'wholly abolished and taken away.' He was, however, allowed to keep the living of Launton, which he had held before his appointment as Bishop, and to the quiet parsonage* there he now retired.

At Launton, though 'he submitted so much to the men of those times that he kept the said rectory, he did usually, as 'tis said, read the Common Prayer and confer orders according to the Church of England.' Skinner appears, in fact, to have been the only Bishop who conferred orders (except in some very rare instances) during the Commonwealth. This was well known among the Anglican party, and in a decade more than 300 candidates were ordained by him at out-of-the-way Launton, among them being the famous Bishop Bull, who when a youth of nineteen was made deacon and priest by Skinner on the same day. 'Bathurst (the famous President of Trinity, 1664-1704), though ordained priest during the Commonwealth, did signal service to the State as physician to the sick and wounded of the Navy, yet remained in close connection with the leading Royalists and exiled clergy. When his services were required to assist Skinner, Bishop of Oxford, in those secret ordinations which he courageously performed regardless of the danger he incurred, Bathurst found his professional visits as a physician a useful pretext' (Burrow's 'Register of Visitors,' p. 121). Skinner lived to see the tide turn, and when as Bishop of Worcester, and full of years, he was laid to

* The house still remains, though much altered. In the garden is a magnificent yew hedge, planted by Dr. Rowlands, Rector *temp.* Elizabeth.

rest in the choir of his cathedral in 1670, 'it was computed that he had sent more labourers into the vineyard than all the brethren he left behind him had done.'

It was not only at Launton that Common Prayer was said, for, in spite of all the penalties which enjoined the use of the Directory, some of the faithful still rehearsed the older formularies. In Oxford itself, the Independent Owen, Dean of Christ Church, winked at a tolerably large congregation using the Church of England rite at his very doors; and the devoted physician Dr. Wallis, in a house opposite Merton, gathered about him Allestree, Dolben, and Fell, to read the orthodox service. 'Owen suffered to meet quietly about 300 Episcopalians every Lord's Day over against his own door, where they celebrated divine service according to the worship of the Church of England.'

It was at Wallis's house that the 'church retired to a ὑπερῷον under such circumstances of primitive devotion and solemnity as was hardly to be paralleled otherwhere, during the storm of that persecution.' Wood says to that place none were admitted but 'their confidants; prayers and surplices were used on all Lord's Days, Holy days, and Vigils, as also the Sacraments administered.'

In 1653 an Act was passed for the parish registers to be given up by the ministers to some layman in each parish, who was to be appointed Parish Registrar, with fees of 4d. for the entry of each birth and burial, and 1s. for each marriage. But the Registrars frequently changed office, the entries were made in different books, and very perfunctorily, so that such records for this period are scanty and of small value. Marriage, too, was made a civil ceremony, resting for its validity upon a simple declaration before a Justice of the Peace, with previous publication of banns. 'Maryinge by Justices,' says a contemporary, 'election of Registers by Parishioners, and the use of Ruling Elders, first came into Fashion in the time of Rebellion under that Monster of Nature and bludy tyrant Oliver Cromwell.' But it was apparently not unusual to get a 'minister' to stand by as a spectator, and give a kind of ecclesiastic sanction by his presence. Thus there is an entry in Deddington Parish Register: 'Alexander Hawtin and Mary Prentice weare married y^e^ 29 day of December 1657 by Thomas Rayer, justice of y^e^ peace for y^e^ burrow of New Woodstock and by M^r^ Jones minister of New Woodstock afores^d^: and weare published by me three markett dayes in y^e^ markett place in Dadington y^t^ is to say on y^e^ 12th & on y^e^ 19th and on y^e^ 26th days being all in December afores^d^.' The 'Justice of the Peace marriages' of the period were after the Restoration declared valid by a special Act in 1660.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE VISITORS.

THE state of Oxford itself after the Royalists had marched out in 1646, may best be described by a quotation from Wood. Anthony and his brother Christopher were, it will be remembered, at school at Thame, but in the beginning of September their elder brother Edward walked over from Oxford and told them that 'they were soon to return to Oxon, and that their mother had much suffered in her estate by the late dreadful fire in Oxon, and therefore was not able to maintaine them any longer at school in Thame. A. W. seemed very sorry at this news because he was well and warme where he was, had good companie, and seem'd to have a fix'd love for the place, even so much that he did never afterwards care to hear of New Coll. school to have given him scholatical education, but applied all that he had to Thame. But there was no remedy for go he must, and go he did with his brother after Michaelmas following, on a horse or horses that were sent for them.

'After his returne to the house of his nativity, he found Oxford empty as to Scholars, but pretty well replenished with parliamentarian soldiers. Many of the inhabitants had gained great store of wealth from the Court and royalists that had for several yeares continued among them: but as for the yong men of the city and university he found many of them to have been debauched by bearing armes and doing the duties belonging to soldiers, as watching warding and sitting in tippling houses for whole nights together.'

Bad, however, as things no doubt were, the University of Oxford had long since acquired a position too strong to be seriously imperilled, and from the moment that the disturbing influences of the war were removed, the place began at once to revive. The history of the University for the next fourteen years is the history

of a return of peace and prosperity, of a restoration of the old order and a correction of abuses. That there were many things which needed correction was sufficiently obvious, and the Parliament determined to take the place in hand and reform it both morally and politically. A beginning was made by sending down six Oxford men who had become Presbyterian ministers,* to preach into submission the University, which was strenuously resisting the Parliament's very first order to suspend for the time all elections to University or college preferments. The Presbyterians' preaching was, as might be supposed, received with much ridicule, but was probably successful to a certain extent in consolidating a nucleus of opinion in their favour which already existed.

The preachers were followed up by the appointment (May 1, 1647) of twenty-four 'Visitors'† to sit in Oxford, reform the colleges, and 'correct offences, abuses, and disorders especially of late times committed there.' Every species of vexatious and often childish resistance was thrown in their way by the Royalists. Their first sitting was to be on June 4, in the Convocation House, and they cited the Vice-Chancellor and University to appear before them at 11 a.m. But 'the Vice Chancellor (Samuel Fell) and the doctors took advantage of a long sermon preached by Harris. Declining the sermon, they mustered in the Convocation House, and the Visitors not having arrived by 11 o'clock they left the House precisely as the hour struck. Their procession meeting that of the Visitors in the Proscholium on its way to the House, the Bedell audaciously cried, "Room for M^r^ Vice Chancellor."' The Visitors, being taken unawares, gave place. As they passed the Vice-Chancellor 'very civilly moved his cap to them, saying, "Good morrow, gentlemen, 'tis past eleven of the clock," and so passed on without taking any further notice of them.'

A more organized resistance met them in the 'Judgment or Reasons of the University,' for not complying with the 'tests' that were going to be exacted of them. These Reasons are very cleverly stated, and furnished, moreover, afterwards a storehouse of evasive replies for the use of those who 'objected,' or could not use the Parliamentary shibboleths. From the Vice-Chancellor to the lowest officers there was determined opposition: Fell refused

* Anthony Wood's estimate of them, written afterwards, when abuse was not only safe but *de rigueur*, was: 'Cornish and Langley two fooles; Reynolds and Harris two knaves; Cheynell and rabbi Wilkinson two madmen.'

† Fourteen laymen and ten clerics, but only five were necessary to form a quorum. The work soon fell into a few hands, and those clerical.

to appear before them, the colleges refused to allow their books to be examined, the Register refused to produce his University registers, the Clerks and Bedells refused to give up the keys and staves of office.

For some months the Visitors were paralyzed, but at last, in February, 1648, they appointed Reynolds Vice-Chancellor in Fell's place, and the Proctors were superseded. But Fell would not give way. He was not in Oxford himself, but Mrs. Fell held the Deanery House for him, and 'every college was a sort of fortress prepared to yield only to force.'

So force was called in, and on April 11, 1648, Pembroke, the universally detested Chancellor, appeared on the scene with a protecting guard of soldiers. His entry into Oxford in such a guise, and without any of the usual ceremonies, formed the subject of many a bitter and scurrilous lampoon; but might was right, and ten contumacious heads of colleges and as many professors were ejected. Mrs. Fell fought to the last; she would not evacuate the Deanery even when the soldiers appeared, so she was carried out into the quadrangle in the chair on which she sat. She afterwards joined Dean Fell at the little Berkshire village of Sunningwell, where he spent his last days. In death he was not divided from the master he had served so well in life; he expired on February 2, 1649, on hearing of the King's execution.

The members of each college, beginning with Magdalen, May 2, 1648, were cited before the Visitors (sitting in the Warden's lodging at Merton College recently occupied by the Queen), and the question put to each man from the head of the college to the choir-boys and servants, was: 'Doe you submitt to the authoritie of Parliament in this present Visitation?'

The answers varied from the simple 'I submitt to the authority of Parliament in this Visitation' through labyrinths of equivocation to the other pole, 'I will not submitt to this Visitation.' The evasive replies were drawn very often from the repository of the 'Reasons of the University' mentioned above. The following are some of the different types: 'This Question is very high in its owne Nature and I am not Lawyer enough nor wise enough to give an Answere to it.' 'I intreate farther Advisement and Information in this Matter and Time to consider it.' 'I have taken an Oath not to give an Answere to any but my owne Visitor in my owne Colledge.' 'I am not satisfied in the Meaninge of the Question.' 'I am not satisfied how far I may submit.' 'I cannot submitt to this Visitation without a Commission from the Kinge.'

Robert Whitehall, a 'time-serving and pot-poet' of Christ Church, is said by Wood to have answered:

> 'My name's Whitehall, God bless the poet,
> If I submit the King shall know it!'

But his answer, as it appears in the register of the Visitors, is more prosaic: 'As I am summoned as a Member of the Universitie, I referre myselfe to the Delegates of the Universitie: As I am summoned a Student of Christchurch my Name itselfe speakes for mee that I can acknowledge noe Visitation but K: Charles.'

Hugh Phillips of Magdalen says: 'Chorister and but a Schoolboy 14 yeare old I confesse that I am not Scholler sufficient to give an Answere to this Question propounded.' Mr. William Dureton, a B.A. and cleric of the same foundation, makes an *ad misericordiam* appeal: 'By non-submission to this Method of Visitation I shall, I feare, nawfragate the present Subsistance I now enjoy, which is all I have in the World: but if I doe submitt, it beinge both repugnant to my practicall Judgement and contradictory to the many Oathes I have taken in the Universitie, I shall, I feare, beinge not yet absolv'd incurre that damnable Sin of Perjury, a sad Dilemma; but yet I resolve to observe that Aphoristicall Edict "*Ex duobus malis minimum eligendum.*"'

It was all to no purpose that they beat about the bush. Every answer, except the plain 'I doe submitt' was ruled to be a refusal, and those who gave such answers were expelled. In November of the same year the sifting process was repeated with nets of closer mesh, and the 'Negative Oath' abjuring all connection with the King, his Council, or his officers, was tendered to each member of the University. Very many who had submitted to the first test had no stomach for the 'Negative Oath,' and another large batch of expulsions followed. The final test was imposed in November, 1649, when the 'Engagement' was tendered in the form, 'I doe declare and promise that I will be true and faithfull to the Commonwealth of England as the same is now established without a King or House of Lords.'

Few who had already 'abjured' the King in the 'Negative Oath' stuck at the 'Engagement,' and so the list of those who were expelled for failing to comply with the last test was small, though in it are found the names of Reynolds, Dean of Christ Church, and the good and learned Pococke. One of the new heads of houses appointed by the Parliamentary Commission was Dr. Wilkins who was made Warden of Wadham in 1648 in place of the Royalist Pitts. Dr. Wilkins was a remarkable character, and the originator of the Royal Society, though the

tradition which has placed its first meeting in Wadham is no longer tenable. Wilkins, whom Anthony Wood calls the 'greatest curioso of his time,' loved to gather other kindred spirits about him, and a sort of Oxford branch of the Royal Society held frequent meetings in his rooms at Wadham. 'The principal and most constant' of those who came to these meetings 'were Dr Seth Ward the present Lord Bishop of Exeter, Mr Boyl, Dr Wilkins, Sir Wm Petty, Mr Mathew Wren, Dr Wallis, Dr Goddard, Dr Willis, Dr Bathurst, Dr Christopher Wren and Mr Rook.' Sometimes the severity of 'scientifique' discussions was lightened by the interpolation of a music-party, and it was in Dr. Wilkins' rooms in 1658 that Anthony Wood heard the Lubeck Professor Baltzar perform on the violin, and snatched a fearful joy in being deputed to play a concerted piece with this foreign prodigy. The scientific fame of Dr. Wilkins probably attracted to Wadham 'that miracle of a youth,' as Evelyn calls him, 'Mr Christopher Wren, nephew to ye Bishop of Ely,' who entered the college as Fellow Commoner, June 25, 1649. In 1653 Wren was elected to a fellowship at All Souls, where Evelyn called on him in 1654, but he retained his connection with Wadham and succeeded Seth Ward in the 'Astronomy Chamber' over the gateway, for which he paid rent in October, 1663. Here it was doubtless that after Evelyn had dined with 'that most obliging and universally curious Dr Wilkins, and seen the curiosities of his house and garden, that prodigious young Scholar Mr Chr: Wren presented him with a piece of white marble which he had stained with a lively red, very deep, as beautiful as if it had been natural.' Dr. Wilkins was devoted to gardening, and seems to have been a past master of the topiary art. Evelyn was delighted with the college gardens, which Wilkins had laid out at a cost of £72 13s., and found much to admire in the yew hedges; the formal walks and parterres; a 'statue which gave a voice and uttered words by a long concealed pipe which went to its mouth whilst one speaks through it at a good distance'; transparent apiaries, built like castles and palaces and adorned with a variety of dials; little statues and vanes; and above all with a statue of Atlas with the globe on his shoulders, which stood on a mound in the midst. Wilkins resigned Wadham in 1659 on being appointed by Cromwell Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, but the Oxford meetings of the Royal Society were held intermittently till 1690.*

In the course of the Visitors' inquiries, from 400 to 500 members were expelled. The total number of those in residence at the time was probably something under 2,000, for the University had

* See Jackson's 'Wadham College,' *passim*.

returned with a sudden rebound to its old prosperity and populousness.

The halls submitted *en bloc*. It was natural that they should do so, for they had been entirely abandoned by the students during the Civil War, and at its close were immediately filled by men who shared the views of the party then in the ascendant.

The power of self-government—that is, of electing head, fellows, and scholars—had been taken away provisionally from all colleges alike, and vested in the Visitors; but as time went on and the weeding-out process was completed, this self-government was restored to most of them. Besides the halls, Merton and Lincoln from the first conformed to the Visitors, and Merton was the first college declared to be in a fit state to receive again its self-government (January, 1649). Corpus and St. John's, though strongly Royalist at first, were tamed by wholesale expulsion; but Jesus, New College, and All Souls were to the very end thorns in the Visitors' sides.

The first Board of Visitors sat from 1647 till April, 1652. From reasons which it is not necessary to detail, this Board became gradually out of touch with the Committee of Parliament, and were superseded by a second Board, who sat from June, 1652, till January, 1654, when a third Board was appointed. As the University became better settled and better mannered, the *raison d'être* of the Visitors disappeared, but the exact manner in which this last Board terminated is not known. Its register breaks off abruptly April 8, 1658, and it probably died shortly afterwards of inanition.

'In the intervals which were suffered to elapse between the commissions granted to fresh bodies of Visitors (which nevertheless included the best of the older members) it is reasonable to believe that we are watching the policy of the Protector in accustoming the University to fall by degrees into its old method of self-government, without the intervention of a perpetual Governing Body' (Burrows' 'Register of Visitors,' lxxviii.)

After the political conformity of the University had been provided for, the Visitors turned their attention to other important reforms. Many of the colleges were very seriously in debt, partly through insufficiency of endowment, partly from the non-payment of rent and the heavy exactions during the recent war. So it was ordered that a certain number of fellowships and scholarships should be allowed to remain void for a time,* and their revenues diverted to the liquidation of the college debts.

* At Wadham, for example, three fellowships and three scholarships were to remain void for four years.

Sir William Paddy, who in 1627 had given to St. John's a 'pneumatick organ of great cost,' left by his will funds to support the service in the college chapel, which allowed £20 to be paid yearly to an organist, £96 to eight singing men, and £24 to four choristers. But the Visitors, 'since Sir W^m^ Paddy's donation was to such uses in the service of God as are now taken away and not likely to be sett up againe,' diverted the fund to the increase of the President's salary and the foundation of some new scholarships. Modern reforms were foreshadowed in making some of the fellowships terminable and in flinging open some of the close scholarships.

The spiritual needs of the students largely occupied the Visitors' attention. To modern views many of the regulations are strange enough. There was to be 'catechising weekely in every colledge upon Saturday in the afternoone between the houres of five and six to be performed by the Head of the House,' and 'all undergraduates are enjoyned to attend to be instructed.' It was also ordered 'that every tutor in the severall colledges doe some convenient time betweene the houres of seven and tenne in the evening cause their Pupills to repaire to their chambers to pray with them, and to take accompt of their time.' Further, 'All Bachelors of Arts and undergraduates are required every Lord's Day to give accompt to some person of knowne ability and piety to be appoynted by the Heads and Governors in their respective societies in the Halls and Chappells sometime betweene the houres of six and nine in the afternoone of the sermons they have heard, and their attendance on other religious exercises on that day.'

The license of a garrison town had left behind it many abuses in Oxford which required correction. It was ordered that 'noe Fellowes or scholars of any Colledge of what degree or qualitie soever shall upon any fasting night goe forth to supper in any taverne, alehouse, or victualling house,'* and to avoid the necessity for resorting to taverns, 'the commons of every Colledge shall be duly carried up into the hall of the Colledge at dinner and supper from tyme to tyme, and that noe student, Fellow, or scholar shall be permitted to take his commons in his chamber at any tyme except in case of sicknesse or takinge of physicke.' Latin was 'peremptorily ordered' to be spoken in all colleges.†

* Oxford taverns have been always sufficiently numerous. *Vide* an interesting note (p. 285), Burrows' 'Register of Visitors.'

† *Vide* Professor Burrows, in his 'Register of Visitors,' for a paragraph on the speaking of Latin at Oxford. 'Most colleges,' he says, 'had a statutable provision for the speaking of Latin; but there was generally a saving clause, which no doubt was found convenient. At Queen's, New College, All Souls and Magdalen, it ran thus: "*Nisi ad aliud idioma extrancorum vel laicorum pre-*

All scholars 'were in their haire and habite to conforme themselves to the statutes in that behalfe, forbearinge all excesse and vanitie in powdering their haire, wearing knots of ribands, walking in boots and spures and bote-hose-tops.' 'No weoman shall be permitted to make beds or doe any other service for students in any Colledge, but auncient weomen and of good report.' The Visitors themselves were advised that 'whereas there hath beene a complaint made to the committee for Reformation of the Universityes that the carriage of many schollers in the University of Oxon is disorderly and loose, and their apparell and haire very unseemly and unfitt for the sobriety and decency that is requisite among persons that make profession of civility and learning: and it is further also made knowen that there is a common practice among them to keep hounds and horses which have been heretofore not usuall among schollers but forbidden, and must needs be very prejuditiall to them by drawing them from their studies, you are hereby desired and required to confer with Heads of Houses concerning a thorough Reformation of these abuses.'

There are numerous and severe punishments recorded in the Visitors' register, now for 'preaching a scandalous sermon,' now for making 'rude and unbeseeming noises' in college rooms, for 'foule misdemeanours in respect of excessive and immoderate drinking and frequent swearing and cursing,' and such-like. Four Fellows of Merton who had in their Colledge Hall 'drunk the King's health, standing bare according to the manner with a

sentia seu ex alia causa rationabili urgeantur." It is not so easy to discover when the practice became obsolete; but it was not yet so in 1590, if we may take the word of Dr. Bond, Vice-Chancellor and President of Magdalen: "I know myne owne house," says he, "and divers other colleges whose scollars dare not presume to speake any other language than Latine." This reply was given to Bancroft by way of answer to reprimands from two successive Chancellors —Leicester and Hatton—who had complained (perhaps at the demand of the Queen) of the disuse of Latin. At the same time Dr. Bond claims to have entirely restored the use of Latin in convocation and congregation, "whereby," as he says with a touch of humour, "hath ensued great quietness in our public assemblies." But in 1609 Bancroft, now Chancellor, insists with vehemence on the neglect of speaking in Latin; and in 1622 Abbot, in a letter to All Souls' College, finds fault with the general deterioration of Latin style in Oxford. "The style of your letter is somewhat abrupt and harsh, and doth rather express an affected brevity than the old Ciceronian oratory. And I am sorry to hear that this new way of writing is not only become the fault of the college, but of the university itself." If the practice had not altogether dropped out before the Great Rebellion, it was certainly not likely to survive such a revolution. . . . The habit of speaking in Latin was, however, kept up to some extent by its retention as the only language in which Convocation could be addressed, and it was not till the last reform of the University constitution by the Royal Commission of 16 and 17 Victoria, and the formation of a 'congregation' of residents, which was to be addressed in English, that the custom altogether decayed.'

tertiavit,' were discommonsed for a week and publicly admonished. The Visitors seem to have used their wide powers with firmness, moderation, and discretion; they were engaged in a resolute attack on gross bribery and corruption in the elections to All Souls Fellowships, when their register abruptly stops. 'We must at least admit,' says Professor Burrows, 'that no other Visitation or Commission during the whole long and eventful history of Oxford University ever had such a task to accomplish. Perhaps it is not too much to say that none, if we consider the circumstances of the times, ever did the work entrusted to them better.'

In 1649 there was a mutiny in the Oxford garrison brought about by a body of the soldiers who avowed the principles of the 'Levellers.' But the mutineers were easily dispersed by Colonel Ingoldesby, the Governor of Oxford, and one or two were shot as an example. In the same year Cromwell himself crushed at Burford a much wider insurrection of Levellers which had originated at Salisbury. Carlyle's account is worth quoting:

'*Monday*, 14 *May*, 1649.—All Sunday the General and Lieut.-General Cromwell marched in full speed by Alton by Andover towards Salisbury. The mutineers hearing of them start northward for Buckinghamshire, then for Berkshire. The General and Lieut.-General turning also northwards after in hot haste. The mutineers arrive at Wantage, make for Oxfordshire by Newbridge, find the bridge already seized, cross higher up by swimming, get to Burford very weary, and turn out their horses to grass. Fairfax and Cromwell still follow in hot speed a march of nearly 50 miles that Monday. The mutineers lie asleep in Burford, their horses turned out to grass. The Lieut.-General having rested at a safe distance since dark, bursts into Burford as the clocks are striking midnight. He has beset some hundreds of mutineers who could only fire some shots out of windows, has dissipated the mutiny, trodden down the levelling principle out of English affairs once more. Here is the last scene of the business. The rigorous court-martial having now sat, the decimated doomed mutineers being placed on the leads of the church to see.

'*Thursday*, 17 *May*.—This day in Burford Churchyard, Cornet Thompson was brought to the place of execution, and expressed himself to this purpose: that it was just what did befal him, that God did not own the ways he went, that he had offended the General, he desired the prayers of the people, and told the soldiers who were appointed to shoot him that when he held up his hands they should do their duty. And accordingly he was immediately, after the sign given, shot to death. Next after him was a corporal brought to the same place of execution, where, looking upon his

fellow-mutineers, he set his back against the wall, and bade them who were appointed "shoot," and died desperately. The third, being also a corporal, was brought to the same place, and without the least acknowledgement of error or show of fear he pulled off his doublet; standing a pretty distance from the wall, he bade the soldiers do their duty, looking them in the face till they gave fire, not showing the least kind of terror or fearfulness of spirit. Cornet Dean, who now came forward as the next to be shot, expressed penitence, got pardon of the General, and there was no more shooting. Lieut.-General Cromwell went into the church, called down the decimated of the mutineers, rebuked, admonished, said the General in his mercy had forgiven them. "Go, repent, rebel no more, lest a worse thing befal you." They wept, they retired to Devizes for a time, were restored to their regiments, and marched cheerfully to Ireland.'

In the registers of the church is an entry: '1649. Three souldiers shot to death in Burford churchyard, buried May 17.' Tradition says that the Levellers were shot with their backs against the south-west wall of the Sylvester Chapel, near the mutilated crucifix: but the removal of ivy (1898) has shown certain well-defined groups of bullet-marks on the wall of a stable abutting on the churchyard, which point to the victims having stood against it.

The 'Levelling' movement occasioned some alarm in Oxford, and Wood notes that 'An order was made by the Delegates (September 11, 1649) that Proctor Maudit, Mr Wilkins warden of Wadham College, and Mr Cornish, canon of Ch: Ch: should be appointed to confer with the mayor and citizens about the better being and security of this place, whether they think fit it should be dismantled, or retained a garrison still, or what other course might be taken for the security of the university and city. This consultation was upon the Levellers rising in Oxford. The officers that quelled them had presents given to them by the University.'

A year later Rallingson's defensive ramparts on the north side of the town were for the most part levelled, and the ditches filled up. 'In the year 1650 and 1651 Colonel Draper being governour of Oxford, sleighted the works about the city, and fortified the Castle very strong and almost impregnable, which cost noe small labor, and cost (some say) to the value of 2 thousand pounds. But for all that when the Scots invaded England in the latter end of July and August following 1651, whether by Colonel Draper's policy (or as was thought his engineer was greased in the fist) or some other thing moving him thereto, he sleighted also the Castle works and took in New Colledge for his garrison, plucking down 2 or 3 houses joyning to the cloister by Hart Hall, and also built

a new fort* in the middle of New College Lane to defend it, and made great havock of their gardens laying close thereby. All which was done from Munday morning (18 Aug^{t}) till Thursday night (21st Aug^{t}), for they heard the King would come to Oxon by Thursday or Friday night. But he was intercepted by much raine and thunder that fell on the Wednesday night (20 Aug) which made him take his abode at Worcester, where he was encountered by the English.' Draper's sudden change of plan, and the abandonment of the castle, where the fortifications had so newly been restored, is very difficult to explain. These impromptu new works were carried out by long-vacation scholars who volunteered, and decorated themselves and their banners with the device *Non arte sed marte*. The volunteers were soon disbanded, for September 3 was 'the day of dark Worcester,' and after that the young King gave no trouble.

In the spring of 1649 Lord General Fairfax and Lieutenant-General Cromwell visited Oxford. They came to see how the work of the 'Visitors' and how things generally were getting on. They arrived in state on Thursday, May 17, and found lodgings prepared for them at All Souls. There they were entertained by Jerome Zanchy† (or Sankey), a lately-appointed Fellow and Sub-warden of the college, a Colonel in the Parliament forces, and a personal friend of Cromwell.

There were, of course, no theatres or interludes as in other days, but after dinner at Magdalen on Saturday they took a little seemly recreation, in the shape of a game of bowls on the college green. Then they went to Convocation, and were made honorary D.C.L.'s. Zanchy presented them for this degree with a 'short but apposite speech' and 'officious prostrations of his body.' On the Saturday there was a 'sumptuous banquet in the Public Library'; on Sunday two sermons at St. Mary's, and on Monday the illustrious pair bade farewell to Oxford.

There had been great doubts and trepidation as to the attitude they would take up, but both of them were well disposed to Oxford, and set the more imminent fears of the University at rest before they left. Cromwell, though nominally the inferior, did all the speaking. 'The General and himself, he said, knew that no

* It is *possible* that the mound in New College Gardens owes its origin to this period, but it is probably earlier.

† Professor Burrows, in his 'Visitors' Register,' p. 227, has a very interesting note on Zanchy. He found the attractions of the camp stronger than those of the University, and he went back to the fighting in Ireland. In 1650 and 1651 he held important commands there under Ireton, and in 1653 the Visitors had to declare his Fellowship vacant. He was one of the Committee of Safety in 1659, but in 1660 joined Monk, and declared for a free Parliament. He was a fiery speaker in Parliament, but eventually died in obscurity in Ireland.

Commonwealth could flourish without learning; whatever the world said to the contrary, they meant to encourage it, and were so far from subtracting any of its means that they proposed to add more.' 'His subsequent conduct proved that he meant what he said. The Barebones Parliament clamoured loudly for a reduction of all establishments, universities included; Milton and his friends never let an opportunity slip of pressing their point. Cromwell turned a deaf ear to them all.'

Two Oxford stories told of the Protector show that he was at times to be touched by softer influences. When the organ was done away and removed at Magdalen College, he ordered it to be taken for him to Hampton Court, and once on hearing one Quin, who had been expelled from his studentship at Christ Church by the Visitors, sing, Cromwell restored him to his place. Anthony Wood had 'some acquaintance with Mr. James Quin, and had several times heard him sing with great admiration. His voice was a bass, and he had a great command of it. 'Twas very strong and exceeding trouling, but he wanted skill and could scarce sing in consort. He had been turn'd out of his student's place by the Visitors; but being well acquainted with some great men of those times that loved musick, they introduced him into the company of Oliver Cromwell, the Protector, who loved a good voice, and instrumental musick well. He heard him sing with very great delight, liquor'd him with sack, and in conclusion said: "Mr. Quin, you have done very well, what shall I doe for you?" To which Quin made answer with great complements, of which he had command with a great grace, that "Your Highness would be pleased to restore him to his student's place," which he did accordingly, and so he kept it to his dying day.' Quin died (1659) *non compos* 'in his bedmaker's house in Pennyfarthing Street.'

CHAPTER XX.

THE RESTORATION: JAMES II.

ON Friday, September 3, 1658, the great Protector died,* and on the Monday following 'Richard Cromwell, his son, was proclaimed Protector at Oxon at the usual places where kings have been proclaimed.' But there were signs that the tide had turned, and 'while He was proclaiming before S^t^ Marie's church dore, the mayor, recorder, townclerk, &c., accompanied by Colonel Unton Croke and his troopers, were pelted with carret and turnip-tops by yong scholars, and others who stood at a distance.'

A few months later there was a petition signed at Oxford to the Parliament to do away with the Board of Visitors, and the Independent Conant (Vice-Chancellor) writes to Owen in London, that 'he must make haste to Oxon for godliness lay a-gasping.' In July, 1659, many Oxford houses (including that of Anthony Wood's mother) and Merton College stables were searched for arms 'to prevent a rising of the cavaliers.'

'On Feb. 13 (1660) Monday at night was great rejoycing at Oxon for the news that then was brought, that there should suddenly be a free parliament. The bells rang and bonfiers were made, and some rumps or tayles of sheep were flung into a bonfier at Queen's College gate.' A rump, too, was thrown through the window of Dr. Palmer (the Warden of All Souls) as he lay ill. 'He had been a great rumper, and a favourite of Oliver.'

At the beginning of May the old Common Prayer found its way back again into the college chapels, beginning with Magdalen. The emblems of Royalty that had been obliterated were furbished

* Cromwell was desperately ill, and expected to die, on August 30. He rallied, however, but, according to the well-known Royalist *mot*, the devil 'took Bond' for him, for 'Dennis Bond, a great Olivarian and Antinomian, died on that day.'

up once more, and the sign of the King's head that had been daub'd over in Oliver's day was new painted.*

The Royalists waxed bolder and bolder. On May 1 there were May games, and a Maypole was set up opposite the Mitre 'on purpose to vex the Presbyterians and Independents.' Conant came with his beadles and tried to saw it down, but before he had got an inch into it the crowd beat him off. On May 10 the King was proclaimed at Oxford.

'May 29th Thursday the day of restoration of King Charles II. was observed in all places in England, particularly at Oxon which did exceed any place of its bigness. The Jollity of the day continued till next morning. The world of England was perfectly mad.' Next year, too, 'the Coronation was kept at Oxon with solemnity. The conduit run nere upon a hogshed of claret.' Penniless Bench was railed in, and wine provided inside for the citizens, who passed across the rail wine and cakes to their friends and betters. 'Lieutenant Griffin with his men gave volleys of shot,' and companies of apprentices roistered through the streets.

A new lot of Visitors were at once appointed. This time they were Royal Commissioners, and went round from college to college tendering the oaths of allegiance and supremacy instead of the 'Negative Oath,' the 'Engagement,' and the other Shibboleths of the past decade. 'All Presbyterians took them,' says Anthony Wood. But there were, of course, refusals, and there was the same sort of turning out and putting in to all sorts of University offices that had taken place in the early Commonwealth. Only the parts were changed, and the alterations made were fewer. A decade had thinned the ranks of the refugee dons, and only about one-sixth of those who had been expelled under the Commonwealth came back at the Restoration. A few months sufficed for the completion of the change, and Fellows appointed under the late régime were allowed to retain their places if there were no Royalists to claim them.

There was lavish granting of degrees to those 'who had suffered for the King.' Divinity was the favourite faculty, and on August 2 no less than twenty-six Doctors of Divinity were created; but 'many were created that had not suffered, and some were notorious Presbyterians.'

The organs were set up again in the college chapels at Christ Church, Magdalen, New, and St. John's, and crowds flocked

* A year or two later the head was restored to the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the south porch of St. Mary's, and the Babe replaced in her arms.

thither to hear the singing and see the surpliced choirs. But the Puritan element was still strong enough to protest, and they jeered at the sung service as the 'whining of pigs,' and one winter's night 'some varlets' at Christ Church took the boys' surplices out of the choir school and thrust them down the privies with long sticks.

With the restoration of Charles II. Robert Plot began his studies for the 'Natural History of Oxfordshire,' which was published in 1677. Plot was a student at Magdalen Hall, and took his M.A. degree towards the close of the Commonwealth. Afterwards he was one of the Fellows of the infant Royal Society, and first keeper of the Ashmolean Museum.

He was a naturalist as natural history was then understood, and had it in his mind to rival Leland and Camden, and produce a complete survey of the natural peculiarities of all the counties of England and Wales. He began with Oxfordshire, and the natural history of that county was produced in 1677. It is an 'immortal' work, full of the 'ingenuity' of his times, seasoned with a proper adulation of all who 'favoured his design,' and refreshing for the genial credulity which pervades it from cover to cover. He rejoices in storms, echoes, 'chemical' earths, stones, and waters, in strange birds and stranger beasts, in mighty trees, in humming springs, in giants and giantesses, in portents, prodigies, and phantoms. Nothing escapes his net. White linnets and pyed pheasants move his wonder, and his special delight is in vitriol and vitriolic humours, to which he attributes much that he cannot otherwise explain. In the quartz of his exuberant fancies is found the gold of numberless interesting facts about the Oxford of his day, and even the dreary chapters on earths and waters repay the effort of reading.

A natural history of Staffordshire followed in 1686, and that was all the way he got towards the realization of his dream of a complete English survey. A history of Middlesex was on the stocks, but 'patronage' was less than he had hoped. 'I see little hopes of proceeding with it,' he writes, 'insomuch that I am fully resolved that in case I receive not a fairer prospect in a little time, to returne that little money I have collected toward it . . . and so totally desist.'

In 1686 he stood for the wardenship of All Souls, but the notorious Leopold Finch was preferred before him. In 1688 he was made Historiographer Royal, and in 1694 Mowbray Herald Extraordinary. In 1690 he married, and, finding his literary schemes but ill-supported, retired to country life at his native place, Borden, in Kent. 'I have now left London,' he says, 'and

have set up my staff here (at Borden), where I think to shake hands with the world, and trouble it no more with natural histories or anything else. I have here a little cottage with a little land belonging to it, which I hope I may be able to manage myself, and get enough out of it to feed my little family, which was the condition of Aglaus Pausidius, who, as Pliny tells us, the oracle pronounced the happiest man in Greece.' He died at the early age of fifty-five, in 1696, and was buried at his favourite Borden.

Through the reign of Charles II. Oxford enjoyed on the whole a peace which contrasted favourably with the disturbances which immediately preceded and followed it. But it was by no means a period of uninterrupted progress, for there was a natural reaction after the strict Puritan régime, and laxity of life and morals followed the discipline of Owen and Conant.

There was much drinking both in public and private, and Wood says 'D^r^ Lamphire told me that there were 370 and odd ale-houses in Oxford.' He makes a note to verify the fact from the Excise authorities, and to write a disquisition on this 'meanes to create idleness and debauch scholars.' Any pretext was seized for a drinking bout, and on festive days excess was considered excusable, if not commendable. When Hugh Bertie was elected member for Oxford, his brother, the Earl of Abingdon, entertained the Mayor and Council splendidly at Ricote, and they came home so drunk that they fell off their horses.

Wood rails at the coffee-houses as much as at the taverns. The drinking of coffee came into vogue at Oxford in the latter half of the seventeenth century. 'Coffey which had been drank by some persons in Oxon 1650 was this year (1654) publickly sold at or neare the Angel within the East Gate of Oxon; as also chocolate by an outlander or a Jew.'* About 1655 Arthur Tilliard, 'an apothecary and great royallist, sold coffee publickly in his house against All Soules College,' and seems to have established there a sort of club of 'virtuosi and wits.' A little later coffee-houses sprung up everywhere; each college had one which it particularly affected, and they answered no doubt to the undergraduate clubs, and partly to the common-rooms of the present day. Wood seems to have owed them a particular grudge, probably because his own personal oddities or mannerisms came in for a good deal of banter in such places. 'The decay of study, and consequently of learning, are coffee-houses, to which most scholars retire, and spend much of the day in hearing and speaking of news, and in speaking vilely of their superiors.' 'This year (1676) came up the

* 'Cirques Jobson, a Jew borne near mount Libanus.'

way of bantering among certaine bachelors and masters used by them in public places and coffee-houses. Uttering fluently romantic nonsense, unintelligible gibberish, flourishing lyes and nonsense.'

If the University was not irreproachable in its morals,* it merely reflected the general laxity of the times, and King and Court set a bad example. 'To humour the King, the publick theaters were stuffed full with the most obscene actions and interludes, and the more obscene pleased the King better, who graced the opening of them with his presence at the first notice of a new play.'

With the Restoration there was a burst of play-acting at Oxford. In July, 1660, a play called 'The Guardian' was acted 'at Newman's dancing schole by St. Michael's Church, on purpose to spite the Presbyterians.' Mr. Glendall, one of the chief student actors, died not long after of a broken bloodvessel, and in this some of the stricter party saw an evident judgment. The next summer a whole series† of plays were acted at the King's Arms, in Holywell. 'These playes wherein women acted (among whom was Roxilana, married to the Earl of Oxon) made the scholars mad, run after them, take ill courses, among which Hyde of All Souls, B.A., afterwards hanged.' In 1664 there was a play called 'The Tricks, or Flora's Vagaries,' acted at Christ Church, with much drunkenness and unpleasant wantoning.

The times saw a general roistering and swashbuckling. A characteristic episode which happened at Fritwell is worth instancing. Mr. Robert Marsham, of Bushy Hall, Herts, goes on a visit to an Oxfordshire squire. 'The ninth of September,' he writes, 'I going to Fritwell to visitt S^r^ Samuell Danvers, he carried me to an Ale-House, and after sometime, wanting company sent for one M^r^ Jackman, who came to us, and immediately after him M^r^ Pope Danvers, who had been enquiring before for me. After wee had all drunk too freely M^r^ Danvers begun a whole flaggon, which everyone pledged, and then began two flaggons in a hand which everyone refused but M^r^ Jackman. When M^r^ Jackman's flaggons were filled, M^r^ Danvers denying that they were soe full as his, M^r^ Jackman gave him the lye, whereupon M^r^ Danvers struck him and they fought. I parted them twice in the house—afterwards they went out of doores, I followed them, but coming into the air I do not well remember what happened

* Some stories of the time do not bear repetition. Grave moral lapses seem to have been frequent, and to have excited little attention.

† Some of the pieces played were: 'The Yong Admirall,' 'The Milkmaides,' 'A Mad World, my Masters,' 'Tu Quoque,' 'Rape of Lucreece,' 'All is Lost by Lust,' etc.

afterwards. The witnesses sweare that they were down one on the top of another, and that I was standing by with my sword drawne. Afterwards I went home with Sir Samuel and his son. The next morning being the tenth, Mr Danvers having been very ill, desired me to goe out with him to take the aire. I knowing nothing of any other designe went along with him into the common field, where I saw foure or five men walking together, and att some distance foure more, whereof one was Mr Jackman. I not suspecting anything of a duell in the presence of so many men went to talk with some of the men. In the interim Mr Jackman and Mr Danvers met and fought with their swords, and after three or foure brisk passes before that wee could come to part them Mr Jackman fell down dead. After which I went about my affaires, and staid three or four dayes in the country without any disturbance and then came away. The Coroner's inquest have found it willfull murder in Mr Danvers, but find nothing concerning me.' [Mr. Danvers got off eventually, and did not die till 1712.]

In September, 1665, the King, the Duke of Monmouth, and the Duke of York came to Oxford from Salisbury. The plague was raging in London, and on the next day the Queen arrived, and the Duchess of York soon followed with thirty coaches. Charles took up his quarters at Christ Church, and the Queen occupied the same rooms at Merton as had formerly lodged Henrietta Maria. In the same college were also accommodated two other ladies, Barbara Villiers (Lady Castlemaine), afterwards Duchess of Cleveland, and Miss Stuart, afterwards Duchess of Richmond. Two of Lady Castlemaine's baby bastards were billeted in Anthony Wood's house, and a third was born to her in Merton College. Public feeling found vent in street ribaldry, and in the pinning of the coarsest and most scurrilous of lampoons on Lady Castlemaine's door. In 1681 Charles was again in Oxford, and held there the last Parliament that the city ever saw. The 'Popish plot' of 1678 had resulted in the passing of stringent anti-Catholic measures, and a Bill for excluding the Duke of York from the succession was now on the *tapis*. Charles had dissolved two Parliaments in order to stop the progress of this Bill, and called a third at Oxford, in the hope that the traditions of the place would prove too strong for the exclusionists. The King came to Oxford on Monday, March 14, 1681, and passed up the High from Magdalen to Carfax, with a brave retinue and universal acclamation. 'The general cry was, "Long live King Charles!" and many drawing up to the very coach-window cryed, "Let the King live and the devill hang up all Roundheads," at which His Majestie

smiled and seemed well pleased.' The undergraduates were boisterously loyal: 'Their hats did continually fly, and seriouslie had you been there, you would have thought that they would have thrown away their verie heads and leggs.'

When the King came to 'the most spatious quadrangle of Christchurch, what with the shouts and melodious ringing of the ten statelie bells there, the colledge sounded and the buildings did learne from its scolars to eccho forth his majestie's welcome. You might have heard it ring againe and againe, "Welcome! welcome!! Thrice welcome!!! Charles the Great!"'

The Commons sat in the Convocation House, and the Lords above them in the Schools of Greek, Geometry, and Astronomy. The undergraduates and Bachelors were sent to their homes to make way for the Court and the Parliament, and there were all the old intolerable nuisances attending the conversion of colleges into hotels.* After all, the Parliament lasted only a week. The Commons pressed the Exclusion Bill, so the King dissolved the Parliament, having with him without doubt the general sympathy of the University in his opposition to the Exclusionists.

Throughout Charles's reign the Papists had gathered courage; they continually strengthened their position, and dared to show their hand more openly, relying on the protection of the Duke of York, and the more than suspected sympathies of the King himself.

So early as 1666 Anthony Wood complains that 'Papists were very insolent in most parts of the nation: Papists frequent in Oxon, frequenting scholers' company at the Coffeehouse: of one of whom the Vicecancellor having notice sent his bedell Nov. 5 [an appropriate date] for him but missed him.' In 1671 the Duchess of York died in the Roman communion; and in the same year two Benedictine monks were present at the Act festivities, one of them being John Huddleston, who afterwards confessed Charles on his death-bed.

In 1673 the Schoolmaster of Magdalen (Mr. Reeves) had to resign his place because he was a Papist, and was said to have been for some time in receipt of a salary from Roman sources in consideration of his making proselytes. Anthony Wood himself fell under strong suspicion of being a Papist, and there is little doubt that his sympathies were with Rome, though he died in the English communion. In 1674, 'I was at night,' he says, 'at the Vice Chancellor's Dr Ralph Bathurst's. He was very civil to me, but Mrs Bathurst said not one word, neither dranke to me

* Anthony Wood goes so far as to attribute the comparative paucity of students at Oxford at this time to the fear of being constantly turned out to make way for the Court.

because shee thinks I am a papist, but shee is mistaken. People avoid my company and shun: everyone tells me I receive not the sacrament.'

In 1678 Obadiah Walker, Head of University College, was openly accused in Parliament of being a Papist, and of 'keeping a priory' near London. The 'priory' turned out to be a house at Hoxton in which a few youths were trained; but it was only with difficulty that Walker escaped being summoned before the House. On November 5 of the same year, 'the Pope, in the shape of an old man with a belly full of crackers, was burnt in effigy before St. Edmund Hall, and a great white cross made of paper and sticks burnt in St. Clements.' On the same night an unlucky dragoon was put into prison in the castle, because in his cups he had muttered some scraps of Latin, and so was taken to be a priest in disguise. The Papists' houses were searched for arms, and in 1679 an order was issued that heads of houses should make a return of all persons in their societies suspected of being papists, so that the oaths of allegiance and supremacy might be tendered to them. 'In Merton College there is only Mr. Anthony Wood who hath been suspected to be popishly affected.' Yet in spite of all repression the Catholics made headway everywhere, and a man was put into prison for saying that there were only five Protestant Bishops in England.

The sympathies of the University were with the Duke of York. One April night of 1683, three 'smart town lads of the Green Riband Club' sat drinking in a window of the Magpie. In a window opposite to them were three young scholars also drinking. The townsmen pledged 'A Monmouth,' and waved their hats over their heads; the scholars answered with 'A York.' 'A Monmouth, a Monmouth, no York!' shouted the townsmen, and so into the street, where a riot of the orthodox Oxford type followed, with proctorial intervention and imprisoning in the castle of the town ringleaders.

In May of 1683 the Duke and Duchess of York, with the Lady Ann, visited Oxford. The Duke was well received, and went through the usual round of sight-seeing and speech-receiving. Among those who addressed him was young Theobald Churchill* (a younger brother of the great John), who read a copy of English verse which his tutor had written for him.

Charles died on Friday, February 6, 1685, and on the Wednesday following James was proclaimed in the orthodox way at Carfax and other principal points in the city. Drums beat and trumpets

* He no doubt owed this distinction to the charms and interest of his sister Arabella, one of the Duke of York's mistresses.

sounded. There were bonfires before the chief colleges, and into the flames were cast copies of the Exclusion Bill. Beer flowed like water, and the 'gravest and greatest seniors were mellow that night.'

In June, 1685, there was some revival of the old military fever in Oxford, when drums beat for volunteers to serve against Monmouth, who had landed at Lyme. Many scholars turned out for training in arms. Leopold Finch, of All Souls, commanded one company, which drilled in All Souls' quadrangle; Bagshaw, a Fellow of Magdalen, drilled another company at Magdalen; and Robert Sewster (Fellow of New) a third at New College. Over the Christ Church contingent was set as Captain, Lord Norris, a boy of fifteen, as a compliment to his father, the Earl of Abingdon. Each troop had its own colours, which are scrupulously noted by Anthony Wood. But no great call was made on these heroes' valour, for in a few days Sedgmoor removed all danger. The University troops, under Leopold Finch, were entertained by Lord Abingdon at Rycote, whence they returned so fuddled that they stove in their drum* on the way. For such services Leopold Finch (fifth son of the Earl of Winchelsea) was made Warden of All Souls, a post he retained for sixteen years, though he was a swindler and a sot, and died a bankrupt.

After Monmouth's rebellion was crushed, the King tried more actively to push his religion, and the Catholics gathered boldness in Oxford. On Sunday, August 15, 1686, Obadiah Walker opened a chapel (dedicated to St. Cuthbert) at University College for public Mass. It was frequented by scholars and troopers. Popular feeling was aroused, and Walker gained the sobriquet of 'Obadiah Ave-Maria.' 'Many of the rabble gathered together while Mass was a-saying, and made cries and shouts insomuch that some soldiers at Mass were forced to come out and quiet them.' Sometimes there were even more profane interruptions: 'A boy went to Mr. Walker's Chappell while mass was singing, with a cat under his coat: which he sometimes pinching and at other times pulling by the tayle made her make such an untunable noise that it put them to some disorder.' In 1686 James appointed to the deanery of Christ Church, John Massey of Merton College, a pupil of Walker's and a Catholic. Massey, too, set up a chapel at Christ Church in the old refectory in the Canterbury quadrangle, where Jesuits and Friars preached. In 1687 the Act ceremonies and festivities were omitted, for which Wood assigns several quaint reasons: 1. Because the *Terræ filii* and

* The broken drum remains in All Souls' bursary. *Vide* Clark's 'Colleges of Oxford,' p. 227.

others may reflect upon the Papists and proceedings in the nation, and so bring the University into danger. 2. Lest the great resort of Priests and Jesuits to the University should pick holes in the divinity disputation. 3. Because arguments against Rome would be tabooed to those who made their disputations in the divinity schools. 4. Because they thought it 'not fit to be merry and cheerfull in these times when the church of England is endeavoured to be over-clouded.'

The King's persistent efforts to romanize the University reached a culmination in his action at the election of a new President of Magdalen College in 1687. The dispossession of a legally elected Protestant of good repute, and the substitution of an unqualified Roman Catholic, against whose moral character allegations were made, was an abuse of the royal prerogative, and an act of violence 'perhaps the most illegal and arbitrary of all those committed during James' reign.' Its consequences were far-reaching and of national importance.

Dr. Henry Clerke, President of Magdalen College, died March 24, 1687. A rumour as to the King's design of appointing a Romanist head and catholicizing the college had already got abroad, and three Fellows of Magdalen who might have had the presidency for the asking, declined the dangerous honour. The college was still without a head when, on April 5, 1687, the King issued a mandamus, 'willing and requiring the college to elect and admit into the place of President, his trusty and well-beloved Anthony Farmer, M.A.'

Farmer was a Cambridge man who had migrated to Oxford. He had been admitted into Magdalen College, but was not a Fellow, and was therefore not qualified for election as head, for the statutes of the college required that Presidents should either be or have been Fellows. His moral antecedents* were considered objectionable, and he was a reputed Catholic. It was this last fact that weighed against him, and but for his Romanist proclivities nothing would probably have been heard of his moral peccadilloes. Of Roman Catholic heads of houses there were already Massey of Christ Church and Obadiah Walker of University; but Magdalen was determined to bring the matter to an issue, and the struggle between the King and the Society began.

The Fellows appealed to their Visitor, the Bishop of Win-

* The definite charges made against him have a trumped-up air. He was said to have kept late hours, and to have been fond of his cups (two foibles common enough at the time), to have kissed the landlady of the Lobster at Abingdon, and to have contrived an exhibition of a naked woman to some members of the University when visiting London. But these were matters of hearsay, and were strenuously denied by Farmer.

chester, as to what was to be done in answer to the mandamus, and he advised that a remonstrance should be sent in to the King. The remonstrance went in due course, and prayed either that the college should be allowed themselves to elect a duly qualified man, or, at least, that the King would choose someone other than Mr. Farmer for President. The petition fared ill, and was returned in a few days with 'The King must be obeyed' for a reply. James gave no other name as an alternative to Farmer's, and after waiting till the last day allowed by the statutes, the college proceeded to make an election for themselves. Such a resolve was not come to without 'hot debates,' in which 'horrible rude reflexions were made upon the King's authority.' The fateful day of election arrived (Friday, April 15, 1687), and the Fellows were standing 'promiscuously together or running to and fro in a tumultuous manner' in the chapel. At last one of the Senior Fellows 'went up to the altar and began the service,' but two of the Papist Fellows left the chapel. Communion finished, the Vice-President, standing up in his place, read the statutes of election. There was a first voting, and on scrutiny two Fellows, Hough and Maynard, were found to have a major part of the votes of those present. A second scrutiny showed Hough to be unanimously chosen. He was formally declared President, and the Fellows left the chapel, 'after we had been there almost five hours.'

The King was not slow in accepting the challenge, and by a letter of April 21 required an account to be given of what had been done. On June 13 the Vice-President and Fellows appeared at Whitehall to answer a citation of the King's Commissioners for ecclesiastical causes, and on June 22 the Commissioners declared Hough to have been 'unduly elected,' and 'amoved' him from the presidency. At the same time they suspended the Vice-President (Aldworth) from his office, and the Senior Fellow, Dr. Fairfax, from his Fellowship, 'for contempt in not obeying his Majesty's letters mandatory.'

The Fellows in residence refused to publish the sentence, and so 'M^r^ Atterbury himselfe by order of y^e^ Comiss^rs^ fixed em on y^e^ Coll: Gate on y^e^ 2^d^ of August following.' A royal inhibition against electing any new Fellows or Demies was also issued.

In view of the allegations of immorality made against Farmer, the King ceased to press his election, and issued (August 14) a mandate for the admission of Samuel Parker, Bishop of Oxford, as President. The Fellows refused to admit him, representing that they 'humbly conceived the place of the President to be full.'

A fortnight later the King was himself at Oxford, and summoned the Society to appear. On Sunday afternoon* (September 4, 1687) twenty-one of the Fellows appeared before him at Christ Church. He 'fell foul upon them and reprimanded them very severely. "You have not dealt with me like gentlemen," said the King; "you have done very uncivilly and undutifully." Here they all kneeled and offered a petition, which His Majesty refused to receive, and said, "Ye have been a stubborn turbulent college. I have known you to be so these six and twenty years. You have affronted me in this. Is this your Church of England loyalty? One would wonder to find so many Church of England men in such a business. Go home and show yourselves good members of the Church of England. Get you gone. Know I am your King. I will be obeyed, and I command you to be gone. Go and admit the Bishop of Oxford Head, Principal, what do you call it of the college?" (One who stood by said, President) "I mean President of the College. Let them that refuse it, look to it: they shall feel the weight of their Sovereign's displeasure."'

The Fellows, however, were not cowed, but wrote an answer on their return to Magdalen, that it did not lie in their power to grant what the King required of them.

On October 20 an augmented body of Ecclesiastical Commissioners, escorted by three troops of horse, entered Oxford to hold a 'visitation' at Magdalen. On the morning of October 22 Hough appeared before the Commissioners, refused to give up the keys or resign his presidency, was declared contumacious, and formally deprived by his name being struck off the Buttery Book. In the afternoon of the same day (Saturday), however, he came into the room where the Commissioners were sitting, 'with a great crowd of followers and said, "Whereas your Lordships this morning have been pleased pursuant to the former decree of the Lords Commissioners to deprive me of the place of President of this college and to strike my name out of the Buttery Book;—I do hereby protest against the said proceedings, and against all that you have done or hereafter shall do in prejudice of me and my right, as illegal, unjust and null, and I do hereby appeal to our Sovereign Lord the King in his Courts of Justice"—upon which the rabble hummed, and Dr. Hough was accused by my Lord Chief Justice of bringing them in, and sureties were demanded of him for the keeping of the peace.'

Hough, however, left Oxford on October 24, and the Bishop of Oxford was installed as President by proxy on the 25th. None

* In the morning James had heard Mass in Massey's new chapel in Christ Church.

of the Fellows except one Catholic, Charnock, were present at the ceremony, and the doors of the President's lodging had to be broken open by a smith. The Commissioners hoped that the bulk of the Fellows would have come to terms, but the King insisted on an absolute submission and apology, and eventually, on November 16, twenty-five Fellows were expelled.

Popular feeling ran strongly in favour of the expelled. 'Collections of money were not long afterwards made both at London and in the country for them. And the news of their expulsion was sent over into Holland with a great many horrible circumstances to aggravate the injustice of the King's proceedings against them; which affected the Princess of Orange to such a manner that she sent over two hundred pounds, to be distributed among them, as one of the Fellows afterwards told me.'

As soon as Hough and the Protestant Fellows were gone, the systematic romanizing of the college began; Romanist Demies and Fellows were admitted, and when Bishop Parker died (March 21, 1688), the King appointed as President Bonaventura Gifford, Bishop of Madaura.* 'The Death of the Bishop of Oxford,' wrote the Papal Nuncio, 'has given room to put the suggestion of Lord Sunderland into execution, namely, to attach Magdalen College to the direction of one of the new Prelates, in order to be able to establish there with authority a place where the true doctrine should be publickly taught, and thence spread consecutively to other parts of the realm.' 'The college now filling apace with Popish Priests and others of the same communion, they seized wholly upon the college Chapel for the uses of their religion, without any regard to the Protestant Fellows, and others not only servants but gownsmen of the Foundation, who still kept their places and resided among them.'

But the tide soon turned, and in the autumn of 1688, when the Prince of Orange was preparing to invade England, when the instincts of the people had been outraged by the trial of the seven Bishops, when everything was against him, James repented too late, tried to undo some of his follies, and restored Hough and the expelled Fellows.

On October 5, 1688, the King dissolved the Ecclesiastical Commission, and 'having declared his resolution to preserve the Church of England and all its rights and immunities, as an

* Parker died in the communion of the Church of England. Bonaventura Gifford was a Northampton Catholic, born 1643, educated at Douay and Paris, and created Bishop of Madaura *in partibus* 1687. He seems to have been an inoffensive man, and after the Revolution was allowed to live quietly in London, where he died in 1733.

evidence of it' commanded the Visitor (the Bishop of Winchester) to settle Magdalen College 'regularly and statutably.' On October 25 the Bishop, after service in the college chapel, called for the Buttery Book, crossed out the names of the Roman Catholic tenants,* re-wrote on the first blank leaf the names of the old Protestant Fellows, with Hough's as President, and declared them to be the only true and lawful members of the Society. Afterwards there was a sumptuous dinner in the President's lodging, and popular 'joy ran over, the music of the bells being outdone by hums and huzzas.' 'At night,' says Dr. Thomas Smith, 'there were great numbers of bonfires, the like to which I never saw here before at any time.'

James's repentance came too late. In November the Prince of Orange was in England, and there was panic among the Oxford Catholics. 'Mr. W^m^ Joyner and M^r^ Ward (a secular priest, chaplain to Massey) took coach at the Greyhound about 9 in the morn. The boys gathered together and cried "Priests," "Priests," but the coachman drove on and avoided them. Divers people then gathered together to assault them. M^r^ Massey Dean of Christ Church remov'd all the things from his chapel and pack'd up his goods.' On Wednesday, December 5, at three in the morning, Lord Lovelace entered Oxford with 300 horse, and on the next day read the Prince of Orange's declaration to a great crowd gathered at Penniless Bench. There was some talk of an attack upon the city by James's dragoons, but nothing came of it, and a band of scholars patrolled the streets, breaking Papists' windows, and especially those of the Mitre Hotel, where the landlord had made himself obnoxious. Shortly after news reached Oxford that Obadiah Walker was a prisoner in the Tower, and that Dean Massey had also been taken with him disguised in a red coat as a trooper.

Though the change of Government was at first welcome enough at Oxford, while the memory of James's misdeeds was still fresh, a reaction afterwards set in, and the University 'became a hotbed of Jacobite disaffection for at least two generations.' William himself never saw much of the University, nor took any pains to conciliate its good-will. He only visited the place once—in 1695. On that occasion he came in to Oxford through Burford, where he passed his birthday. There was at that time a well-established industry at Burford in the making of saddles and harness. One saddler there was 'said by the English to be the best in Europe.' Two saddles of his making were presented by the Burfordians to

* They were allowed fourteen days for removal, and were served with two dishes of meat per diem for that period.

the King, who 'received them with much grace, and ordered them to be specially reserved for his own use.'

At Oxford William only stopped one night. The Duke of Ormond, Chancellor of the University, escorted the King in the little tour of inspection which he made. He saw All Souls, Magdalen, and the newly-built Sheldonian Theatre. In the area of the theatre there was laid out for William's delectation a 'rich banquet, or, rather, an ambigue.' But the King would have none of it, and tasted nothing, it was said, through fear of poison. 'Now so it was that the Masters Bachelaurs and Undergraduats being confined to their galleryes and the women to theirs, there were only some gentlemen and ordinary people and attendants in the Area who rudely scrambled away all the banquet and sweetmeates, all sorts of souse fish [lobsters, crayfish], fruit, &c., about 50 large dishes besides very many little or small dishes intermix'd.' The University had been at great charge in providing this banquet, sending their beadle to London to buy all the rarities he could get. 'But the King would not eat anything, but went out, and some rabble and townsmen that had got in by the connivance of the "stairers" seized upon the banquet in the face of the whole University,' who were in the galleries, and could not help themselves.

So writes Anthony Wood, and goes on: 'This is partly my case. I have spent all my time in providing a banquet* for the honour of the University, which being done and applauded by the generality, come some barbarous people and spoil† that banquet, burne it in the face of the University, and undoe the preparer of the banquet.'

There is a pathos in this entry, for it is practically the last that the wounded historiographer ever made. His fatal illness was already upon him. He adds a line which looks like the beginning of a tirade against the Earl of Clarendon, and then breaks off abruptly. A fortnight later he was in his coffin. He died of a total suppression of the urine, probably brought on by a chill, the attack of which he thus describes: 'Early in the morning of the 1. of November Friday, I shifted my shirt, and after that all my wearing apparell; but by twelve finding an alteration in my body, I was resolved to walk it out. So at one of the clock I went to Bayworth,‡ and returning exceeding weary I went to bed at 8 of

* The 'Athenæ Oxoniensis.'

† The 'Athenæ' was ill received in official quarters. Fell shamefully mutilated it by his corrections and additions, and the second volume was voted 'libellous' and publicly burnt.

‡ Bayworth, to which poor Anthony took his last walk, must have been a strange place, and evidently made from the first a deep impression on the

the clock. But between 1 and 2 the next morning after I had slept four houres, I fell to vomiting and was very uneasie for 3 houres. At length drinking a spoonfull or two of cherry brandy it put me into a sleep, and sleep I did for about three or four houres. About 10 I rose and was hungry; but putting on my clothes without warming, I fell to vomiting againe and so continued till 2 or 3 in the afternoon; then slept two houres and was well, but my urine all the while was as red as blood. I set all these things downe to prevent the like for the future by shifting.'

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mind of the antiquary. He first saw Bayworth in 1659, when he was twenty-seven, and describes it in a strain of romance entirely unusual for him. The entry from his diary of that date is interesting enough to quote in full:

'In this Lent, but the day when I cannot tell, A. W. went as a stranger with Thomas Smith, Master of Arts (ejected his clerkship of Magd: Coll. by the Visitors 1648 but now living obscurely in Oxon), I say he went with the said Smith on a certaine morning to a private and lone house, in or neare Bagley Wood, between Oxon and Abendon inhabited by the Lord of Sunningwell called Hannibal Baskervyle esq. The house called Bayworth is an old house, situated in a romancey place, and a man that is given to devotion and learning cannot find out a better place. In this house A. W. found a pretty oratory or chapel up one paire of staires well furnish'd with velvet cusheons and carpets. There had been painted windows in it but defaced by Abendon soldiers, rebels in the grand rebellion. He also found there an excellent organ in the said oratory, on which M^r^ Smith performed the part of a good musitian, and sang to it. M^r^ Baskervyle was well acquainted with him and took delight to heare him play and sing. He was civil to them but A. W. found him to be a melancholy and retir'd man; and upon further enquiry of the person he was told that he gave the third or fourth part of his estate to the poor. He was so great a cherisher of wandering beggars, that he built for them a large place like a barne to receive them, and hung up a little bell at his back doore for them to ring when they wanted anything. He had been several times indicted at Abendon Sessions for harbouring beggars. In his younger dayes while he was a student in Brasenose Coll: he would frequent the house of his kinswoman the Lady Scudamore opposite to Merton Coll. church: at which time the mother of A. W. being a girle and a sojournour in his father's house neare to it, he became acquainted with her: and when he knew that A. W. was her son he was civil to him. And A. W. afterwards frequented the house, especially in the time of his son Thomas Baskervyle, to refresh his mind with a melancholy walke and with the retiredness of the place as also with the shady box-arbours in the garden.'

CHAPTER XXI.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

AFTER the Revolution, a new shibboleth was invented in the Oath of Allegiance to William and Mary. On August 1, 1689, every beneficed clergyman, and all who held appointments in the University, were to take the oath; if it was not taken by February 1, 1690, deprivation followed. It was no new phenomenon, and a good many men were alive who remembered the application of similar tests in the Parliamentary 'visitations,' and in the Royalist reaction of 1660. Only on this occasion the numbers of those who felt unable to comply with the test were very much smaller than at either of the other times. The beneficed clergy who were ousted in Oxfordshire could be reckoned on the fingers, and there were, perhaps, two score of clerical and lay non-jurors deprived in the University. Still the question was discussed with much bitterness and heat, and the non-juring faction was powerful enough. Oxford, with its loyal tendencies and traditions, was from the first a centre for Jacobites and non-jurors. John Wesley, indeed, in reference to the great resort of non-jurors to Oxford, was led upon one occasion to remark that it was 'paved with the skulls of Jacobites'—so many remained to find their last home within its walls.

Anne was twice in Oxford—in 1702 and 1708—on each occasion on her way to Bath, where Prince George was to drink the waters for his asthma. The Queen was loyally received with the customary formalities,* and a Bible and a pair of Woodstock gloves were duly presented to her. In 1708 little glove-making Woodstock indeed presented 'an address to her Majesty to assist her against the Pretender and all his adherents upon the invasion

* In 1702 there was a fierce and unseemly struggle for precedence between the University and city on the occasion of the Queen's visit.

of the pretended Prince of Wales,' but Oxford itself was strong against the Hanoverian succession, and warmly championed Sacheverell in 1709. Soon after his impeachment, Dr. Sacheverell's journey to his benefice became a triumphal procession, so warm was the popular sympathy shown him on all hands. 'At every town through which he passed [1710], the principal Tory gentry came out to meet him, and presented him with gifts of money or other valuables. In Bicester he met with the same kind of reception, except that as he passed down Sheep street when opposite the meeting-house of the Dissenters, he was insulted by the owner of that house running up to the coach with his scavenger or broom in his hand, and holding the pole in a threatening manner to the window, crying out shame, and at the same time upbraiding the crowds following.'

The accession of George I. brought bitter disappointment to Oxford. The King was proclaimed in the usual places, and with the usual formalities, but to Jacobite eyes, at least, there was a marked lack of dignity and of enthusiasm in the function, and the majority of the gownsmen were undoubtedly Jacobite. The chief Whig colleges were Merton, New, and Oriel, and among their members was formed the well-known Whig organization, the Constitution Club.

This club soon came into conflict with the prevailing spirit. A glorious opportunity of testing the popularity of the two political creeds occurred at the end of May, 1715. May 28 was the birthday of George I., May 29 the anniversary of the restoration of Charles II. On the first of these dates the Constitution Club met at the King's Head to celebrate George's birthday, but they were set upon by a body of Jacobites, and after a fray had to disperse. The same night, writes Hearne, 'a good part of the Presbyterian meeting-house in Oxford was pulled down. There was such a concourse of people going up and down, and putting a stop to the least sign of rejoicing [for George's birthday, May 28] as cannot be described. But then the rejoicing this day [May 29, anniversary of the Restoration], notwithstanding it was Sunday, was so very great as hath not been known since the Restauration. There was not a house next the street but was illuminated. For if any disrespect was shown, the windows were certainly broke. The people ran up and down crying, "King James the Third! The True King! No usurper! The Duke of Ormond!" &c., and healths were everywhere drunk suitable to the occasion, and everyone at the same time drank to a new Restauration, which I heartily wish may speedily happen. In the evening they pulled down a good part of the Quakers and Anabaptists' meeting-

houses. This rejoicing hath caused great consternation at court. Some of these fanatical persons shot off guns in some places and had like to have killed many. Two or three were wounded.' These disturbances drew forth some 'rattling letters' from the Secretary of State to Charlett (the pro-Vice-Chancellor) and the Mayor, and on June 10 ('James the III.'s' birthday) rejoicings were strictly forbidden. So 'honest' men, as Hearne always terms the Jacobites, had to drink the King's health 'very privately.' He and some of his special cronies celebrated the occasion by a supper at Foxcombe, and only got home at ten o'clock. Wadham dared to illuminate some of its windows, but this was put a stop to by Dr. Charlett. On August 1, the day on which 'George, Duke and Elector of Brunswick, usurped the English throne, there was very little rejoicing in Oxford. The bells only jambled, being pulled by a parcel of children: and the song called *The King shall enjoy his own again** is in the mouths of all.' The University, indeed, took small pains to conceal its sentiments, and when the Duke of Ormond, the Chancellor, was impeached for treason and fled to France, Convocation elected as Chancellor his brother, the Earl of Arran, by 140 votes against the Earl of Pembroke's three. Some street riots, and neglect of any celebration of the Prince of Wales's birthday, eventually led to the Government sending a troop of dragoons under Major-General Pepper to Oxford to keep the place in order, and a hollow address of congratulation, presented by the University after the defeat of the Pretender, deceived no one.

As years went on, Jacobitism grew gradually weaker in the county, but it died hard, and even in 1745 the north part of Oxfordshire is said to have been largely disaffected. 'So strong was the attachment of the great families about this part of Oxfordshire to the Stuart family, that if the Scotch had been able to push forward, and the French Court had sent an army as strong as that which accompanied King William, they would have thrown off the mask and taken up arms in their behalf. Lord Cornbury was the soul of the disaffected in this vicinity; next to him (he said) stood Sir Robert Jenkinson, of South Lawn Lodge. He then told me that when the Pretender, as he was called, was in England incognito, he visited Lord Cornbury; and one Banbury, a baker of Charlbury, who shaved the prince and dressed his wig, knew the Pretender by a word which dropped incautiously from Lord Cornbury, and by the extraordinary respect which was

* Another favourite ditty began:

'We'll have no Prince Hanover;
Let James, our King, come over.'

shown to the mysterious stranger. I then stated that I had been informed by the keeper of the High Lodge in Woodstock Park (Mr. Morris) of meetings being held there prior to the Rebellion of 1745, at which Lord Cornbury, Messrs. Jenkinson, Cope, Dean, Basset and Lacy used to assist, and that these assemblies took place generally in the night time.'* In 1754, Dr. King, a notorious Jacobite and Principal of St. Mary's Hall, elicited rounds of applause from the whole audience in the theatre, filled with peers, members of Parliament, and country gentlemen, by thrice pausing on the word REDEAT, purposely introduced into his speech to gratify the 'Old Interest.'†

In 1754 there was an expiring flicker, and the Jacobites made some show at the elections of that year, mustering strong about the hustings arranged in Broad Street for the county election, and preventing with personal violence the access of Whig voters. The Ministry attached special importance to the result of the Oxfordshire elections of 1754. The Ministerial candidates were Lord Parker and Sir Edward Turner; the 'New Interest' was represented by the True Blue candidates, Lord Wenman and Sir James Dashwood. General attention was attracted to the contest, and the election was fought with great vigour and bitterness. Hogarth's four pictures relating to the election are famous. There were songs:

> 'From London into Oxford Town,
> See all the world is hurrying down,
> Dashwood and Wenman for a crown—
> Doodle, doodle, do'—

and two of the popular cries against the Ministry were, 'Give us back our eleven days,' alluding to the alteration of the style in 1751; and 'the Murdered Maid,' in reference to the execution, 1753, of Mary Blandy (see *post*, p. 303), who, some thought, should be acquitted. Wenman and Dashwood were elected, but were eventually unseated on petition in favour of Parker and Turner. Sir Edward Turner owned a fine house at Ambrosden (which his son pulled down 1776, see *post*, p. 297), and was dubbed Whip-beggar Turner by his election adversaries, because, as a magistrate, he ordered a female vagrant to be whipped in Bicester town. But Jacobitism was in reality played out, and when George III. ascended the throne in 1760, there was an outburst of quite unfeigned loyalty. As a sentimental and artificial attachment, Jacobitism lingered, indeed, long after this, and in St. John's

* Narrative of Dr. Brookes, Rector of Shipton-under-Wychwood (who was eighty in 1810), quoted by Marshall in 'History of Woodstock.'

† Brodrick's 'History of Oxford University.'

College (that home of Stuart tradition), almost within living memory, 'the fellows in their Common Room, "a large handsome room, the scene of a great deal of learning and a great many puns," held their wine-glasses over the finger-bowls and toasted the King over the water.'*

So far as the external or internal life of the University is concerned, there is little to call for special notice in the eighteenth century. That period is generally represented as being the nadir of academic life at Oxford, but there is much to lead us to believe that things were not so black as they have been painted. If the general level was not as high as it is now, there were still left some who did not bow the knee to Baal, and a vast amount of good work was done, and much erudition acquired.

It must not be forgotten, either, that this period saw the birth of Worcester College. It is true that in its beginnings it could not compare with some of the glorious foundations that preceded it, but still, as the last of the 'old' colleges, it is entitled to respect.

In 1283 the great Benedictine Abbey of St. Peter at Gloucester founded at Oxford a house for its members who were studying at the University. This was the first attached monastic house at Oxford; but the example was soon followed, and a number of other Benedictine houses got leave to associate themselves with Gloucester in its undertaking. So in 'Gloucester College' sprung up a colony of Benedictines, the members of each house having a separate dwelling within the college precincts. Gloucester, Glastonbury, St. Albans, Abbotsbury, Edmundsbury, Abingdon, and Norwich were probably the most important†; and the huddled group of little buildings on the south side of Worcester quadrangle, with coats of arms and rebuses over the doors, still shows how the brethren were housed. The institution answered its purpose well, and was in a flourishing condition when it was entirely suppressed at the time of the dissolution of religious houses. For a few years the buildings were made over to the new Bishop of Oxford as a palace. Then they were taken back by the Crown, and finally given by Elizabeth to William Doddington, who sold them to the newly-founded St. John's College. So what was once Gloucester College, and afterwards the Bishop's palace, became now Gloucester Hall, under the 'protectorate' of St. John's. For a time the new scheme answered well enough, but by-and-by, from the Rebellion troubles, and from other causes,

* Clark's 'Colleges of Oxford.'

† A. Wood's list is: Gloucester, Glastonbury, St. Albans, Tavistock, Burton, Chertsey, Coventry, Evesham, Eynsham, St. Edmundsbury, Winchcombe, Abbotsbury, Michelney, Malmesbury, Rochester, Norwich.

its fortunes waned terribly. At last, in Wood's words, there was 'not one scholar in Gloucester Hall [*circa* 1680], only the Principal and his family, and two or three more families that live there in some part to keep it from ruin; the paths are grown over with grass, the way into the Hall and Chapel made up with boards.' In 1692 Dr. Woodroffe of Christ Church was appointed Principal. He was an energetic, pushing man, and sought to revive the fallen fortunes of Gloucester Hall by the fantastic experiment of making it a special house for young Greeks, who were to be sent from the East to study at Oxford. Sancroft and other enthusiasts were at the time in favour of union between the Greek and English Churches, and abetted this whimsical scheme for the importation of Greek students. It was all planned in a methodical way; the Patriarch of Constantinople was applied to, and twenty Greek students (five from each of the four Patriarchates) were to be sent over to make a start; the chapel services were to be in Greek, and voluntary contributions were to support it all. Such a scheme had failure written on its face. Five Greek youths did actually come to Gloucester Hall in 1698, but achieved no great things; for either they were decoyed away by the Catholics, or found the living at Oxford so little to their taste that they returned to their own friends. 'Though they who came first were well enough ordered for some time, yet afterwards they and those that came after them were so ill-accommodated both for their studies and other necessaries, that some of them stayed not many months, and others would have been gone if they had known how; and there are now but two left there.' Dr. Woodroffe, in fact, as another writer says, 'used the poor Greek boys in such a manner that they all or most of them ran away from him.'*

Then, just as Gloucester Hall was falling altogether, a worthy Worcestershire Baronet, Sir Thomas Cooke, came to the rescue. He wanted to found a college at Oxford, and set apart £10,000 for the purpose. Gloucester, St. Edmund, and Magdalen Hall each pressed their claims, but Gloucester eventually carried the day, and so blossomed into Worcester College, though not till Sir Thomas and Woodroffe were both in their graves.

It has been fortunate in subsequent benefactions, and fortunate in the laying-out of its beautiful gardens; and, finally, the opening out of Beaumont Street brought the queer out-of-the-way little college on the outskirts of old Brokenheyes within touch of the other colleges and Oxford life in general.†

* *Vide* Clark's 'Colleges of Oxford,' p. 438.

† It was known as Botany Bay; and 'Matthew Griffith, of Gloucester Hall, absent from St. Mary's when his grace was asked, was excused because he

The century that followed the Restoration was a period of considerable building activity in Oxford. About the same time that Worcester College came into being, Queen's College was rebuilt. The Provost (William Lancaster) and scholars were granted a 'lease for 1,000 years at a peppercorn rent of so much ground in the High Street leading to East Gate as shall be requisite for making their intended new building there strait and uniform,' and so arose the familiar 'High' front. Hearne notes that 'on Friday Oct. 19 1733 they began to pull down the houses at Queen's College on the S.E. side, in order to erect a new part, Queen Caroline having given them a thousand libs.' This was George II.'s unfortunate Queen, who followed up the traditions of her predecessors—Philippa and two Annes, and Henrietta Maria—in her liberality to Queen's. She promised a second £1,000, but at her death it 'still remained,' as the benefactors' book says, 'unpaid but not unhoped for.'*

The end of the seventeenth century saw Trinity practically rebuilt by Dr. Bathurst. The chapel was built (1691-94) from Dean Aldrich's designs, corrected by Wren. The garden quadrangle of New College dates from 1684; Wren finished Tom Tower at Christ Church in 1682, Dean Aldrich† built Peckwater Quadrangle, and Wyatt the Canterbury Gate in 1778. Hawkesmoor, Wren's favourite pupil, designed the bizarre eighteenth-century additions to All Souls, including the Back Quadrangle, the Hall, and Warden's Lodgings. At Magdalen the fine elms in 'the Grove' were planted at the Restoration to take the place of the trees which had been cut down to help to build the defences of Oxford in the Rebellion; and in 1735 the great block of 'New Buildings' was erected. It was possibly lack of funds alone, which prevented the reconstruction of the college *a fundamentis* in the Palladian style.

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could not hear the bell owing to the distance of the place and cross-winds.' *Vide* Clark, *ut supra*, p. 445.

* Clark's 'Colleges of Oxford,' p. 127.

† Dr. Henry Aldrich was one of the principal figures at Oxford in the last years of the seventeenth century. Born in 1647, he entered Christ Church in 1662, took his M.A. 1669, and became a Fellow and tutor of his college. In 1681 he was made Canon of Christ Church, and Dean in 1689. He was a man of high attainments, and of such sweet disposition and manners, that he became a universal favourite. He wrote many scholastic works, the best known of which is a compendium of logic. He designed All Saints' Church (with its pleasing spire), the Peckwater Quadrangle at Christ Church, and Trinity Chapel, though he got his designs corrected by others, and sometimes by Wren; but he is best known as a musical composer, and devoted special attention to the choir and to the singing in the cathedral. He wrote Church music which is still sung, and also the famous catch, 'Hark, the bonny Christ Church bells!' He died in 1710.

The chief authority for the earlier part of the century is, of course, Thomas Hearne. Anthony Wood's diaries cease with his death in 1695, and Hearne's begin in 1705. Thomas Hearne was the son of the parish clerk at White Waltham, Berks, and was born in 1678. By the bounty of one Francis Cherry he was first put to school, and afterwards sent to Edmund Hall, Oxford, where he matriculated in 1695. Four years later he took his B.A. degree, and having a natural aptitude for antiquarian research, and especially for books, he was made in 1701 an assistant-keeper of the Bodleian. In 1712 he rose to be second keeper, but in 1715 he lost his place as a non-juror. 'He was debarred the Library,' he says, 'upon account of the oaths, and new keys were made and the lock of the library door altered, tho' he hath got the old keys by him, having not made any resignation, or consented to the putting of anyone into his place.'

The rest of his life was passed in studious retirement in his beloved Oxford: for there he preferred to remain in spite of the efforts of his friends, who tried to induce him to accept appointments elsewhere. He died on June 10, 1735, and was buried in St. Peter's-in-the-East, where his monument still remains. The last real entry in his diaries was made on June 1, 1735; the dates June 2, 3, and 4 are written in, but he was too ill to add any observations. His industry was indefatigable, and he left 145 volumes of his notes. It was natural that he should feel bitterness at the loss of his office, and a vein of undying animosity to the powers that were runs through his writings. His abuse of all that were not, in the cant of his times, 'honest'—that is, Jacobite—is acid and unstinted. If his diaries are not so interesting as Anthony Wood's, it is the fault of the times, which were less exciting.

He, like Wood, delights in scandal, and in 1717 he tells how a sixpenny pamphlet was published, called 'Merton Walks; or, The Oxford Beauties,' giving an account of objectionable goings-on in the walk under Merton wall. 'The Society of Merton College have since ordered the garden to be kept close and the steps to be pulled down. One of the beauties in this pamphlett is Miss Fiddes, that lodges against the Angel Inn at Shipwey's the barber's. She is daughter of Mr. Fiddes, Bachelor of Divinity, and is often styled by the name of the Body of Divinity from her father being now publishing a book in folio which he calls a Body of Divinity. This young Lady is handsome, but very conceited and void as it were of understanding.'

On September 5, 1719, came to Oxford 'two daughters of Richard Cromwell, son of Oliver Cromwell, Protector, one of

whom is married to Dr. Gibson the physician. They are both Presbyterians, as is also Dr. Gibson, who was with them. They were at the Presbyterian meeting-house in Oxford on Sunday morning and evening, and yesterday they and all the gang with them dined at Dr. Gibson's, Provost of Queens', who is related to them, and made a great entertainment for them, expecting something from them, the physician being said to be worth 30,000 libs. They went from Oxford after dinner.'

Hearne was an enthusiast on the subject of church bell-ringing. His diaries are full of notices of bell-ringing, and his praise of good or blame of bad ringers is unstinted. Nothing pleased him better than to be complimented on the keenness of ear with which he would detect errors as he paced up and down in Wadham Gardens and listened to a peal being rung at New College. In 1733 he had a great treat, for a party of fifteen ringers came on foot to Oxford from London, and performed on various peals. 'On Wednesday the Londoners began to ring at Christ Church in the morning a quarter before 12, and they rang till 2 most incomparably well, when the gudgeons being bad the biggest bell* [*i.e.*, the tenth] fell down, but not through the loft, otherwise they proposed to have rung 5,040 changes. In the evening they rang the 8 bells at Magdalen College, but two or three ropes breaking they could not proceed above half an hour. On Thursday they began to ring at New College, proposing to ring the same number of changes [viz., 5,040] there. They began a little before 12, and rang about ¾ of an hour, when one of the ropes broke, and so they were stopped.' The peals seem to have been ill-kept, for another attempt at the 5,040 on New College bells was frustrated by more broken ropes. Afterwards, when the great bell was up again at Christ Church, 'the Oxford men rang all 10, and endeavoured to imitate the Londoners; but they were soon out, and made poor work of it in comparison with the others.'

In the same year came to Oxford a greater musician even than the bell-ringers, but Hearne's prejudices sealed his ears to the sweet music on this occasion. 'July 5,' he says, 'one Handel, a foreigner, who, they say, was born at Hanover [and this was his unpardonable crime, no doubt], being desired to come to Oxford this Act to perform in music, in which he hath great skill, is come down, the Vice-Chancellor having requested him to do so, and as an encouragement to allow him the benefit of the Theater both before the Act begins and after it. Accordingly he hath published

* This was Great Tom, once the 'clock bell' of Osney Abbey. *Vide* p. 174, *supra*. It had been recast in 1680, and Wren had finished Tom Tower in 1682.

papers for a performance to-day at 5s. a ticket. This performance began a little after 5 o'clock in the evening. This is an innovation. The Players might as well be permitted to come and act; the Vice-Chancellor is much blamed for it. In this much, however, he is to be commended for reviving our Act, which ought to be annual, provided the statutes were strictly followed and all such innovations (which exhaust gentlemen's pockets, and are incentives to lewdness) were hindered.

'*July* 6.—The Players being denied coming to Oxford by the Vice-Chancellor, and that very rightly, tho' they might as well have been here as Handell and his lowsy crew, a great number of forreign fidlers, they went to Abingdon, and yesterday began to act there, at which were present many gownsmen from Oxford.'

Handel gave five performances, at which the price of admission was always five shillings, and Hearne complains: 'N.B.—His book (not worth 1d.) he sells for 1s.'

In 1734 the Prince of Orange was at Oxford, and was created Doctor of Civil Law and entertained in the usual manner. Hearne 'never wagged out all the while he was here to see him, tho' I walked yesterday into the country,' but 'was told' that there was a prodigious concourse of people. He consoled himself, however, by thinking that 'there were no persons of distinction that came to show their respects out of the country.'

In Oxfordshire county history of the eighteenth century much the most important event was the making over to the Duke of Marlborough of the royal Manor of Woodstock. The battle of Blenheim was fought on August 2, 1704, and a 'grateful nation' decided to reward the victor with a grant of land and money. The old demesne of Woodstock with its ruinous palace, no longer able to house Royalty, seemed a suitable estate, and so by a special Act of Parliament there were made over to John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, 'the Honour and Manor of Woodstock, the hundred of Wooton, the manors of Hordley, Wooton, old Woodstock, Hanborough, Stonesfield, Combe, and Bladon, together with the piece or parcel of ground commonly called Woodstock Park.'

The whole grant of land amounted to about 2,330 acres, out of which 1,793 consisted of park and pleasure-grounds. The honours and estate were settled on the Duke's posterity by his daughters and their heirs, and there was a special clause forbidding for ever any cutting off of the entail. It was all to be held on a picturesque grand sergeantry tenure, and the Duke of Marlborough was bound to present to the Sovereign at Windsor Castle each 2nd of

August a banneret or standard with 'flower-de-luces painted thereupon.'

Besides the land £500,000 was granted to build a house withal, for in the contemporary survey the old manor-house is described as 'altogether ruinous, and the scite thereof of little value at present.' So the great palace of Blenheim rose near the old house, but on the opposite side of the valley, and on the left bank of the Glyme. Sir John Vanbrugh (the builder of Castle Howard, 1702) was the architect, and the building was begun June 18, 1705. 'The history of its construction is a series of petty squabbles, malicious thwarting on the part of the Duchess, and a niggardly withholding of money. Vanbrugh, it is true, was extravagant, but not only was he cheated of his salary, but even refused admittance to see his own work by an order from the hand of Atossa herself.' When Sir John visited Woodstock in 1722, he was not allowed within the gates of Blenheim, and remained two nights at the Bear in Woodstock. 'In 1710 the Duchess stopped the works, and desired the workmen to pay no attention to the architect's orders. In 1714 £220,000 had been received from the Treasury; the debts owing from the Crown amounted to £60,000 besides, and even the shell of the building was not completed. The Duke died without ever inhabiting it. By will he left £10,000 a year to the Duchess "to spoil Blenheim in her own way," said Vanbrugh, and £12,000 a year "to keep herself clean and go to law."'

At last the great pile that we know to-day was finished. Heavy and incoherent, but yet impressive from its vast extent, it continually recalls Evans' epitaph:

> 'Under this stone, reader, survey
> Dead Sir John Vanbrugh's house of clay.
> Lie heavy on him, earth, for he
> Laid many a heavy load on thee.'

In 1723 the old manor-house, with all its memories, was pulled down. Vanbrugh wanted to preserve it as a picturesque foil to the new palace. But the Duchess razed it to the ground, for she thought the architect had an eye to its restoration as a house for himself.

Though Blenheim was built, a good many of the finest of the old Oxfordshire houses went to ruin in the eighteenth century. It may be interesting to quote here the list of the most eminent county houses given by Plot (1677), though the ingenious Doctor is certainly capricious in his selection: Bletchingdon, the residence of the Earl of Anglesea; Cornbury, of the Earl of Clarendon; Ditchley, of the Earl of Lichfield; Adderbury, of the Earl of

Rochester; Wroxton, of the Countess of Down; Broughton, of Viscount Saye and Seal; Great Tew, of Viscount Falkland; Sherburn, of Lady Abergavenny; Rycote, of Lord Norreys; Hanwell, of Sir Anthony Cope; Bruern, of Sir John Cope; Yarnton, of Sir Thomas Spencer; Thame Park and Caswell, of Sir Francis Wenman; Adderbury, of Sir Thomas Cobb; Caversham, of Sir Anthony Craven; Ambrosden, of Sir William Glyn; Sarsden, of Sir William Walter; Cornwell, of Sir Thomas Penyston; Shipton-under-Wychwood, of Sir Compton Read; Chiselhampton, of Sir John Doyley; Weston-on-the-Green, of Sir Edward Norreys; Waterstoke, of Sir George Croke; Stanton Harcourt, of Sir Philip Harcourt; Watlington Park and Stonor, of the Stonors; Rousham, of the Dormers; Tusmore and Somerton, of the Fermors; Brightwell, of the Stones; Aston-Rowant, of the Clerks; Cote, of the Hoards; Chastelton, of the Jones; North Aston, of the Brooks; Rotherfield Grays, of the Knollys; and Maple Durham, of the Blounts.

It will be noticed that some houses of the first rank, such as Minster Lovel, Swinbrook, and Burford, are omitted, not to speak of mansions such as Shutford, Pudlicote, Fritwell, and many others. Out of Plot's thirty-seven houses eleven now remain, and parts of others, such as Hanwell and Stanton Harcourt; but the 'parsonage house of the rectory of Chinnor, little inferior to some of the afore-mentioned either in greatness, commodiousness, or elegancy of building,' is a thing of the past. The ruin of Minster Lovel, Stanton Harcourt, and Rycote is especially to be regretted.

The Harcourts had not lived at Stanton since Sir Philip's death in 1688. His widow sold the furniture, and early in the eighteenth century the family removed to their new house at Nuneham Courtenay, which was building at the same time as Blenheim. The magnificent old manor-house at Stanton stood for many years dismantled, and fell gradually to decay. At last, about 1780, it was taken down, though the great kitchen and a tower containing a chapel and other rooms were spared. This tower is known as Pope's Tower, for the poet is said to have used the top room of it as a study. Pope spent two summers in the rambling, half-deserted house at Stanton, and found sometimes a congenial companion in his brother-poet Gay, who was staying at Cokethorpe close by. Several letters of Pope are extant, in which he laughs about the ghosts at Stanton, and at the witches' Sabbath feasts which the country people thought went on in the great kitchen on wild winter nights. On a pane of red glass* in

* Now preserved at Nuneham Courtenay.

the top tower room was scratched with a diamond: 'In the year 1718 Alexander Pope finished here the fifth volume of Homer;' and on the south wall of the church outside may still be seen a tablet bearing some verses of his to the memory of two lovers struck by lightning in the harvest-field in 1718. The lines are stalwart enough to quote:

'Think not by rigorous judgment seized
A pair so faithful could expire;
Victims so pure Heaven saw well pleas'd,
And snatched them in celestial fire.

'Live well, and fear no sudden fate
When God calls virtue to the grave;
Alike 'tis justice, soon or late,
Mercy alike to kill or save.

'Virtue unmoved can hear the call,
And face the flash that melts the ball.'

About the same time was dismantled and abandoned that ancient home of romance, Minster Lovel. Ever since the Norman Conquest it had been a seat of the Lovels. In John's reign Maud Lovel had founded there an alien cell* for Ivry; in 1430 William, Lord Lovel, had built there a fine church, and that great manor-house whose vast and dismembered ruins still frown in the Windrush Valley. The story of Lord Lovel's disappearance, and of the finding of the skeleton in the secret vault, has been told elsewhere;† but in the early eighteenth century the house was falling into decay, and about 1730 was finally dismantled and unroofed. There was apparently a sale of material on the spot, and 'in the roof of the rectory house at Ducklington (near Witney) built at this period are some fine oak beams painted with the royal arms, and the coat (sable, 3 square fetter-locks argent) of Sydenham of Titchmersh, allied by marriage with the Lovels, which doubtless came from this source.'

At the end of the eighteenth century there also fell to decay the ancestral home of the Fettiplaces at Swinbrook. This strange name was of Norman origin, and is spelt indifferently Feteplace, Fityplace, Fettiplace, Phetiplace, and in other forms. Though the family was of vast local importance, its members seem to have taken comparatively little part in national affairs. They were said to possess land in fifteen different counties, but their chief seats were at Childrey and Little Shefford, in Berks, and at Swinbrook, near Burford, and by marriage they were allied with almost all the great Oxfordshire families. Adam Feteplace was Mayor of Oxford *circa* 1240. Two centuries later Thomas Fete-

* See p. 131, *ante*.

† See p. 132, *ante*.

place, Sheriff of Berks and Oxon, married 'Beatrix, daughter of the King of Portugal.'* At the end of the fifteenth century Alexander Fettiplace raised the great house at Swinbrook; in 1650 John Fettiplace (of whose possessions Dorchester formed part) built the free school of Dorchester out of the remains of the old guest-house of the abbey.

The direct line came to an end in Sir George Fettiplace, who died 1743, and left behind him money for many goód purposes, among them for the maintenance of Swinbrook and Widford† Churches, for the distribution of green coats once a year and bread every Sunday, and a special sum to reward a clergyman who four times a year should preach sermons to the memory of him (Sir George) and his sister, Mrs. Pytts.

A nephew assumed the name of Fettiplace, but the family came at last to an abrupt conclusion in the death of Charles Fettiplace in 1805. He was seized with apoplexy at Burford as he was returning from some races, and expired in 'room No. 11' in the Bull Inn. The Fettiplace estates soon after came under the hammer, and Lord Redesdale purchased the greater part of the Swinbrook property. The house at Swinbrook (of the heraldic glass in which Rawlinson gives a long list) became ruinous, and has now completely disappeared, though the fruit-gardens, terraces, and 'mussel pond' may still be traced. In the little church close by are some extraordinary monuments of the family, in which six Fettiplaces (1504 to 1672) lie, as Rickman puts it, 'on shelves.'

Still sadder than the fate of Swinbrook was that of Rycote, where the palatial house was deliberately pulled down at the close of the century by Lord Abingdon, who made Wytham henceforth his seat. Rycote had housed many royal heads, including Elizabeth, James I., Charles I. and II., and Anne; it was, in fact, the place at which distinguished visitors to the University generally passed a night after leaving Oxford, on their return journey to London. Lord Keeper Williams,‡ on acquiring the estate of Rycote about the middle of the sixteenth century, had turned the older house of the Quartermaynes into stables and offices, and reared a noble building whose magnificence is attested by several existing engravings. Its size was perhaps beyond the means of

* Later researches point to this Beatrix *not* being identical with Beatrix (the illegitimate daughter of John of Portugal by Agnes Perez) who was afterwards successively Lady Arundel and Lady Huntingdon.

† The houses which once formed the parish of Widford have disappeared; the church lies isolated, with its overgrown graveyard embowered in lilacs and laburnums, and is, alas! falling into decay.

‡ *Vide* p. 165, *ante*.

the estate. A fire destroyed the north wing (*circa* 1750), and it was never rebuilt, necessary repairs were not executed, and fifty years later the great place was pulled down. Little now remains except the ornamental water known as Rycote Pond, some offices, and the beautiful domestic chapel of the Quartermaynes, which in its turn is being allowed to fall to ruin.* A good house in another part of the county was destroyed about the same time by Sir Gregory Page Turner, who pulled down Ambrosden; he seems to have had a mania for destruction, for he razed two other houses which he owned at Blackheath and Sundon.

Fire proved a fatal foe to many of the old Oxfordshire houses, for the means of suppressing a conflagration in the country were more inadequate than they are now. The apogee of the great Oxfordshire family of Dormer was reached in the middle of the seventeenth century, when William Dormer, High Sheriff of Oxford, and known as 'Dormer the Splendid,' built a great mansion at Ascott, near Stadhampton. This was, however, burnt to the ground (1662) when scarcely finished and before it had been lived in. Some fine brickwork of the old offices, the fish-ponds, and the gardens still remain, together with the wide gate-posts at the entry to the drive. Similar gate-posts on the road entering into Bradwell show where a fine house of Lord Inchiquin's was burnt. Lord Jersey's seat at Middleton Stoney was burnt in 1755, but was apparently not a very fine house if Horace Walpole is to be believed, who was there in 1753, and says: 'It was built for a hunting-box, and is still little better.' Fire also destroyed Bruern Abbey, a house of the Copes (once the home of Johnny, the hero of Preston Pans), and in the present century Heythrop and Filkins, and most recently the fine old manor-house of Hampton Gay.

Wheatfield House, a seat of Lord Charles Spencer, near Lewknor, was burnt on December 31, 1813. There were some New Year's Eve theatricals going on, but before 'The Sergeant's Cockade' was over there was an alarm of fire. Two French officers who were prisoners on parole at Watlington rode over and organized the villagers in their attempt to save the house. But the ornamental water was so hard frozen that little use could be made of it, and only the paintings and some of the books were saved.

In the seventeenth century the Wenmans moved from Witney to Thame Park, and their moated and crenellated house at Caswell fell into decay, and is now represented only by fragments con-

* Its internal fittings of Renaissance work, including a two-storied pew, were unique; they are now decayed and ruined.

verted into farm-dwellings. The Copes of Hanwell, on purchasing the estate of Shelswell (*circa* 1650), pulled down both the village and the church, and 'enclosed,' as sole owners, what had been the parish of Shelswell. Thus also the great Roman Catholic family of the Fermors abandoned their old home at Somerton soon after they had bought the estate of Tusmore (*circa* 1600). Somerton House fell into ruin, and has disappeared with the exception of one gable, and the Elizabethan house of Tusmore was itself pulled down by William Fermor in 1766, when the existing Palladian mansion was built. By the middle of the present century the Fermor family fortunes had dwindled, and with them the Roman Catholic influence which had once been so strong about Tusmore. In 1857 the Earl of Effingham bought the whole estate at auction for £152,000.

Whilst speaking of Oxfordshire homes, mention may be made of two stories attaching to the manor-house of Fritwell. Fritwell had already been the scene of the duel where Mr. Jackman lost his life (*ante*, p. 271), and about 1712 the manor-house was let to a family called Longueville. There were two brothers of that name who, a little later, were living in the house, and both were in love with the same lady. Then the younger imprisoned the elder in a noisome little 'kennel' in an attic, and there kept him for fourteen years until he died of starvation. So runs the tale, and the kennel (no doubt a 'priest's hiding-place'), to which access was gained through the sliding-back of a cupboard, remained until five years ago. About 1730, Sir Baldwin Wake, buying Fritwell, came to live in the manor-house, and another tragedy ensued. 'In 1735 Sir Baldwin and his two sons, Baldwin and Charles, were playing cards very late one night, when a quarrel arose, in which the father struck his eldest son so heavy a blow that the latter fell, his temple striking an angle of the wainscot, and died immediately. Horror-stricken, Sir Baldwin was about to waken the household, when his younger son, Charles, proposed to leave the house and take on himself the suspicion of having caused his brother's death. This proposal was silently accepted, and father and son carried the dead body into an unused attic—perhaps the same one that saw Longueville starved to death. In the morning it was conjectured that the brothers had gone off on a sporting expedition, and nothing was thought of their absence till the discovery of the body ten days later. Suspicion, of course, fell on Charles, but every attempt to discover him failed. Twelve years later Sir Baldwin confessed on his death-bed that he had caused his son's death, and revealed the name which Charles had assumed. The latter had enlisted

as a private in a line regiment, and was then quartered at Alexandria in Egypt. His innocency was established, and he returned to England.'

But of all Oxfordshire houses, one of the most interesting is Burford. At Burford was once a small priory or hospital of St. John the Evangelist. At the Reformation it was given to one Harman, and either he or his successor built there a stately and picturesque Renaissance house, with a remarkable debased chapel connected with it by a cloister. From Harman it passed rapidly through two other possessors to Sir Lawrence Tanfield, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, *tempore* James I. Sir Lawrence lies buried in the church close by on one of the best 'four-post' tombs in England, but his unquiet ghost is said to be seen driving on moonlight nights in a coach and six through the park of his other estate at Great Tew.

From Tanfield, Burford passed by marriage to Lucius Carey (Viscount Falkland). Then, shortly before the Civil War, Speaker Lenthall bought the estate, and his family held it nearly 200 years. The Speaker passed away in the autumn of 1662, but his death was far from peaceful, for he was haunted, it is said, by remorse for his share in the King's death, and must needs send for Ralph Bridoak, Rector of Witney, to come over and confess him on his death-bed. At the end of the seventeenth century a strange murder was committed in the priory grounds. In front of the Becket Chapel in Burford Church is a black marble stone, inscribed:

> 'Here lyeth the body of John Pryor Gent. who was murdered and found hidden in the Priory Garden the 3rd day of April 1697.'

This John Pryor (who was sixty-seven when he died) was a devoted servant of the Speaker, and left trustee under his will. His murderer was said to have been Lord Abercorn, who married the widow of Lenthall's grandson. Pryor watched over the interest of the widow's children by her first marriage too jealously for Lord Abercorn's taste. There was a story of loud words and the clash of rapiers heard one spring evening, and the next day Pryor's body was found in a summer-house. Suspicion ran strong against Lord Abercorn, and he was tried at Oxford Assizes, July 19, 1697; but justice had not fair play, for a crowd of peers and friends of the accused were present to overawe the jury; so after a seven hours' trial Lord Abercorn got off.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the house was outgrowing the fortunes of its possessors, and in 1808 it was pulled down and rebuilt with much of its old grace, indeed, but with sadly

docked dimensions.* In 1826 the Lenthalls were forced to sell the pictures. They had been acquired by the Speaker, and were part of the spoils of Charles I.'s collection,† so that their sale at Christies' attracted much attention at the time. Three years later, in 1829, the house itself came under the hammer, and was purchased by one Greenaway, a local land-owner. The Lenthalls removed to their house at Besselsleigh,‡ in Berks, and so passed out of Oxfordshire history. Greenaway dismantled and abandoned Burford Priory, and left it, as it stands to-day, little better than a picturesquely ruinous shell.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century a vast improvement had taken place in Oxfordshire roads, in common with those in most other parts of England.§ Young, writing of the 1740 period, 'remembers the roads when they were in a condition formidable to the bones of all who travelled on wheels. The two great turnpikes which crossed the county by Witney and Chipping Norton, by Henley and Wycombe, were repaired in some places with stones as large as they could be brought from the quarry, and when broken, left so rough as to be calculated for dislocation rather than exercise. At that period the cross roads were impassable, but with real danger.'

The roads were generally of great width, with an ample margin on each side between the hedges, in order to put a stop as far as possible to the prevalent custom of driving over fields where the road was very bad. In 1733, as the Prince of Orange was driving through Milton Lane on his way to Oxford, an officious farmer, where the road was almost impassable, 'threw down his hedges and opened a way for His Highness to pass through his grounds,' saying that he had now received the 'most desired honour of his life in being able to contribute to the safety of a Prince of the House of Orange, for his father had done as much for the immortal King William.'

Brewer, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, says: 'The change to be now observed is of a most gratifying description: turnpike roads, in general good, intersect the country in the direction of *all* its principal markets; and the majority of the parochial

* As may be seen by comparing the existing house with the view in Skelton.

† The pictures included some Vandykes, and the well-known picture of Sir Thomas More and his family, attributed to Holbein, and now at Cokethorpe.

‡ Mr. E. K. Lenthall, 'the last person born in Burford Priory,' died at Besselsleigh in 1892.

§ The dissolution of the monasteries was followed by a rapid deterioration of roads throughout the country, and the nadir was reached about 1750. In 1763 was passed the Turnpike Act, which authorized the levying of tolls for road-repair.

or cross-ways are much better than the great thoroughfares were a century ago.'

With the improvement of the roads there was a corresponding improvement in locomotion. Anthony Wood has an entry in 1667 of a journey from Oxford to London by stage-coach, but the coach took two days to cover the distance, and the passengers passed the night at Beaconsfield. In 1669 'flying' coaches were set up, and undertook to 'perform the whole journey between the University and the Citty of London commodiously in one day during the summer half of the year from Ap. 26 to Michaelmas, the fare for each passenger to be 12s.'* An advertisement of 1671 gives notice that 'every day in the week there will be a coach set out (at six o'clock in the morning) from Thomas Moor's house over against All-Souls Colledge which shall commodiously perform the whole journey to London in one day, and from the Saracen's Head on Snow-Hill, London, to Oxford again the next day, and so constantly for this summer half-year. *If God permit.*'

The 'commodiously' was a matter of comparison. The roads were then execrably bad, and passengers had to dismount at the bottom of Shotover Hill and make the ascent on foot. Anthony Wood relates the death of one Matthew Slade, a doctor of physic, who 'died in the stage-coach between the top of Shotover Hill and Wheatley, supposed to be occasioned by his violent motion going up Shotover hill on foot.'

These coaches were duly licensed by the University, but there were frequent attempts made by unlicensed persons to break through the monopoly. These piratical or non-licet coaches were a special object of Vice-Chancellors' wrath. A notice posted July 20, 1670, declares: 'Whereas Edward Bartlet hath without a licence from me presumed to set up a Flying Coach to travaile from hence to London, these are to require all scholars and members of this University not to make use of the said flying coach so set up.—P. Mews, Vice-Can.'

In 1731 Hearne narrates that 'One Barnes of S^t^ Aldates in Oxford a Freeman of the city having set up a waggon last Summer to carry goods to and from London without the Vice-Chancellor's license, he was put into the Vice-Chancellor's Court by M^r^ Thos Godfrey, but he declined appearing, upon which he was committed to the Castle, where he continued about a week, and then was removed by habeas corpus to London, where no one appearing against him he was dismissed immediately, and on Friday Nov. 19 he returned to Oxford in a triumphant manner with a laced hat, as if he designed to insult the university.' Facilities

* Soon reduced to 10s.

for travelling spread but slowly to the country towns. The first post-chaise was advertised at Bicester in 1758. 'At the Crown Inn, Bicester, Gentlemen and Ladies may be accommodated with a new and neat four-wheeled Postchaise, able horses and a careful driver at a reasonable rate by their most obed^t^ humble servant W. Shillingford. Likewise saddle horses with a guide to any part of England.' The first public coach ran between Bicester and London in 1793.

It was only gradually that travelling became more secure. Highwaymen had, it is true, ceased, as a rule, to infest Bagley* and Stowwood, and other spots too near Oxford; but the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds was not altogether a sinecure till late in the eighteenth century, and posting carriages, and even coaches, were still occasionally 'held up' as they mounted the long slopes of Gangsdown or Aston Hill. The coach-road between Witney and Burford, where it stretches along the crest of the downs looking down on to Bampton, was also a favourite hunting-ground for knights of the road. And here to the mere physical terrors of highwaymen was added the dread of supernatural assailants, for at a certain place called Worsham Bottom, where the highroad dips and takes a great circular sweep, the post-boys at times had much ado to get their horses past. A little man, dressed all in black, with knee-breeches and an ill-favoured face, dashed out, it was said, on stormy nights, and tried to seize the reins; and 'Black-stockings' is still a local memory. Even the country inns were at times no safe refuge, and a notorious murder was committed at the Golden Ball, a wayside hostelry at four cross-roads on the outskirts of Nuneham Woods. The story is well known how the landlord was found, knife in hand, in the bedroom of a robbed and murdered guest, and hanged for what was thought to be his crime; and how the murdered man's servant made, years after, a death-bed confession that it was he who had done the deed. The landlord, it seemed, had meant indeed to murder, but on entering his victim's room found himself forestalled in his crime by the servant.

A foul murder of a different kind was done at another lonely cross-road inn called Hopcroft's Holt, the half-way house between Oxford and Banbury. Here, on the night of January 18, 1754, John Spurrier, the landlord, and his wife were butchered. In the inn parlour is still to be read the notice offering a reward for information as to the murderers. But they were never found;

* Though in 1784, on a February night, the 'Bath coach' was 'held up' by armed footpads at the bottom of Cumnor Hill, and eight passengers lost £24 in money.

and on the tombstone of the victims in Steeple Aston churchyard is a curious inscription implying that had the magistrates given as much attention to tracking man-slayers as game-slayers, this deed would not have remained unavenged.

But of all Oxfordshire *causes célèbres* the most celebrated was the trial of Mary Blandy, the only child of Mr. Francis Blandy, Town Clerk of Henley. About 1750 a Scotch Captain, William Henry Cranstoun, came to Henley to recruit, and learning that Mary Blandy would have a fortune of £10,000, fell to courting her, and eventually obtained from her a promise of marriage. The father, however, heard evil tales of the Captain, and, finding that his antecedents were very shady, refused his consent to the match. So Captain Cranstoun left Henley, but sent Miss Blandy some cairngorms for a keepsake, and a packet of 'powder to clean the pebbles.' The powder was arsenic, and with it Mary Blandy dosed her father till he died August 14, 1751. Suspicion was aroused, and the wretched girl tried to fly. But a howling mob was at her heels before she could get to the bridge, and she had to take refuge in the Angel Inn. There she was apprehended, and taken off to Oxford. On February 29, 175½, she was tried at Oxford in the Divinity School, because the Town Hall was rebuilding. She showed a bold front till one Miss Mountenay, an intimate friend, gave evidence, and then her fortitude broke down. She was condemned, and afterwards was hanged, on April 6, 1752. Her body was carried through the execution crowd flung over the shoulder of one of the Sheriff's men, who took it to his own house and coffined it. About five o'clock the same evening they drove her off from Oxford in a hearse, and reached her home at Henley about midnight. The pathos of the situation melted the hearts of the authorities, and they let her be buried in consecrated ground. So at one o'clock in the morning, 'in the presence of the greatest concourse of persons ever known upon such an occasion,' the strangled girl was laid to rest under the chancel of Henley Church, between the bodies of her mother and her murdered father. The event created a most unprecedented sensation throughout the nation, and twenty-six pamphlets and ballads were printed. An example will suffice:

> 'Alas, the record of her page will tell
> That one thus madden'd loved and guilty fell;
> Who has not heard of Blandy's fatal fame,
> Deplor'd her fate, and sorrowed o'er her shame?'

In 1790 water communication between London and Birmingham was opened; the canal enters Oxfordshire at Claydon, and, keeping near the Cherwell, joins the Thames at Oxford. Young

complains that 'a very large tract of valuable* meadow-land has been spoilt by the navigable canal from Banbury to Oxford, which is very ill executed. The land is rendered extremely boggy by the continual oozing of the water through its banks, and in lieu of meadow-grasses of the best quality, with which it abounded, is now overrun by *Caltha palustris* (marsh marigold) and other aquatic plants.' In spite of this the canal was an immense boon to the neighbourhood, especially in regard to the conveyance of coal. At Heyford, which had a wharf on the canal, coals came down to 1s. 1d. per cwt. 'Before the canal the people were greatly distressed for firing, wood being scarce they were obliged to burn straw, etc., or anything they could procure: but now Heyford is as well supplied with coals as any village in Oxfordshire.' But at times the canal froze. 'In the beginning of 1795 there was great distress from the severity of the weather and long continuance of the frost. Oxford and its neighbourhood were dependent for the supply of coal on the canal, which was now frozen for 10 weeks. It was not till March 4 that the navigation was reopened, when the price of coals fell at once from 4s. to 1s. 6d. per cwt.

But, in spite of all the improvements in communication by road, and of the making of the canal, whatever 'trade' there was in the county, instead of increasing, dwindled amain. The waning of the blanket industry at Witney has been already referred to; the wrought-iron work of Woodstock was a thing of the past. Woodstock gloves had always graced the fingers of royal visitors in bygone days, but by the opening of the nineteenth century little was done in the glove-making way; and the pillows of peasant lace-makers as they sat at their cottage doors gave way to the looms of the manufacturing towns. No one made saddles now at Burford, or cast bells there or at Chacomb. Banbury made no plush, and the malt markets of Henley had lost their reputation. The experiments of growing wood at Yarnton and rhubarb at Banbury came to nothing; and hemp for making linen was no longer planted at Fritwell or Baldon. Oxfordshire, in fact, was fated never to be an industrial county, and if we except some tweed-making at Chipping Norton and some implement-making at Banbury, it remains guileless of manufactures to this day. Honourable mention must, however, be made of one long-established business which still survives. Hearne writes in 1727: 'John Beckford and his wife are now living in Wolvercote paper

* The best meadow-land in the county was reputed to be at Water-Eaton, and at North Weston in the rich Thame district, and such pastures fetched £3 per acre.

mill, he is famous for making paper. Some of the best paper in England is made at Wolvercote Mill.' The last sentence is true to-day as it was in Hearne's time, for at Wolvercote is made much of the fine paper that pleases the connoisseur in Clarendon Press editions. The quarries of Headington, from which comes the leprous and quickly-ageing stone a feature of so many Oxford buildings, are still worked, but the famous Kitt's Quarries, south-west of Burford, which Wren delighted in, have been covered with grass for a century and a half, and the equally famous Taynton workings are but little used now. The potteries of Marsh-Baldon and Nuneham, and the tobacco-pipe manufactory* at Shotover, had been abandoned even in Plot's day (1677).

In the second half of the eighteenth century began that 'enclosing' of open lands which was destined to change the face of Oxfordshire as well as other parts of the country. Those who had grazing or other rights over the great open fields, down, brushwood and scrub which adjoined most of the villages clubbed together in petitions to Parliament for a right to 'enclose.' The petition being granted, an Enclosure Act was obtained, and each proprietor received a *pro rata* allotment (varying according to the extent of his old rights), which he proceeded to fence in. There is no doubt that agriculture and husbandry benefited enormously by the change, and land after enclosure soon produced twice, and in some cases three times, the old rent; but the small men and the villagers came worst off, for they often could not afford to fence, and generally sacrificed their rights for a money payment, and thus the common land was lost for ever.

The amount of land so enclosed was enormous. At Bicester 1,200 acres of common land were enclosed in 1757, 980 acres at Fringford, 800 acres at Heath, 1,700 acres at Heyford, 1,636 acres at Black Bourton, and so on all through the Oxford villages. Young, writing *circa* 1810, says that 'enclosing has been the capital improvement of the county, for proportionably to the extent of it more land has been enclosed since I first travelled in it forty years ago than in any county in England.' Between 1755 and 1800, 68,480 acres had been enclosed in Oxfordshire, and there were still 100 parishes unenclosed when Young wrote. The whole amount enclosed up to 1870 has been reckoned at 100,000 acres, and some enclosures like Cottisford Heath and Wychwood were only made in the last half of the present century, in spite of Brewer, who says that *circa* 1800, 'except the dreary district termed Otmoor, and the extensive wilds pertaining to the forest

* The white earth of Shotover was famous for tobacco-pipes, which were made there in great quantities about the time of the Civil War.

of Wychwood, the waste land of Oxford is comparatively small.' Otmoor, with its 4,000 to 5,000 acres, remained at the beginning of the present century practically the same as it had been when the Romans spanned it with their causeway. Lord Abingdon, who was 'paramount over the seven towns,' was adverse to schemes of drainage, and so the Ray stream which traverses it and heavy rains succeeded in turning it from time to time into a lake. These seven towns or villages (Charlton, Oddington, Noke, Beckley, Horton, Fencott, and Mercott), which lay round the edge of Otmoor, had rights of common pasturage upon it, and there were practically no 'stints'; each sent on to graze whatever he thought fit. Yet farmers distrusted 'the moor,' for it was haunted by a special 'rot,' which set upon the sheep, and by the 'moor evil,' which slew the cattle.* One farmer in 1798 out of a flock of 140 sheep lost all but three in one attack, so that although Nature had kindly provided a specific for the 'moor evil' in a certain mineral spring at Oddington, Otmoor was mostly given up to great flocks of geese, 'whose constitution was well suited by its coarse aquatic sward.' Brewer enlarges on the 'disgusting effluvia arising from the weedy recesses of Otmoor,' but says they were not so deleterious to the inhabitants as might be supposed; and Young 'cannot but remark that such a tract of waste land in summer, and covered the winter through with water, within five miles of Oxford, in a kingdom which regularly imports to the amount of a million sterling in corn, and is almost periodically visited with apprehensions of want, is a scandal to the national policy.' In 1805 an Act for its enclosure was obtained, sluices were cut, banks thrown up, and the land forthwith began to find its way out of the hands of the villagers. The final Acts of its enclosure in the spring of 1830 were attended by serious riots (fomented and abetted, it is said, by Lord Abingdon); the yeomanry were called out and quartered at Islip, fences were torn down, arrests and valorous rescues of villagers were made, and much bitterness evoked. On September 6, 1830, the yeomanry, while escorting 'Otmoor rioters' to the county gaol, had to pass through St. Giles' Fair, then being held at Oxford, and were roughly handled by the populace, who rescued the prisoners. There were many later uproars connected with the enclosure, and sometimes well-to-do farmers were sent to gaol, till in 1834 Sir James Park, who took the criminal business at the Oxford Lent Assizes, said he hoped he had heard the word 'Otmoor' for the last time.

* There were besides on the moor *flits*, or holes whence peat had been dug, and *fills*, or 'hills of quaking bog,' to entrap unwary beasts.

Wychwood was not enclosed till 1862. In 1800, when Young* rode through it, he found 'many very beautiful scenes, particularly where the *nut fair* is held, a glen by Mr. Dacre's lodge, and others approaching Blandford Park, with vales of the finest turf, but not one very fine tree of navy oak in a ride of sixteen or seventeen miles.' It was never likely to prove profitable, he thought, for ship-timber, and should be enclosed. 'The morals of the whole surrounding country demand enclosure imperiously. The vicinity is filled with poachers, deer-stealers, thieves, and pilferers of every kind. Offences of almost every description abound so much that the offenders are a terror to all quiet and well-disposed persons, and Oxford gaol would be uninhabited were it not for this fertile source of crimes.'

The high prices paid during the French wars for corn and for timber for shipbuilding acted as 'irresistible temptations with many landlords, and considerable ranges of wood' were accordingly 'grubbed up.' Thus the great woods round Stanton St. John were much curtailed. Yet 'grubbing up' was no light task; the fern lingered, and seedling furze and all manner of barren grasses reappeared with exasperating persistency. Sometimes the new land was incorrigible. One 'inveterate field was pared and burned, twice folded with sheep, covered with lime to the extent of eighty quarters per acre, and well dunged, yet the effect was the same—a pretty remarkable one of converting every grain into grass, and leaving a bed of *agrostis* irradicable. Yet I do not despair of conquering it.' This 'grubbing up' was generally done by contract, the 'grubber up' paying £30 to £35 an acre for good woods, and contracting to leave the land fit for the plough. The result of so much clearing was to raise the price of wood enormously. At Stokenchurch the price of wood was increased by 40 per cent., and in other parts of Chiltern a half-load, that used to cost 8s. 6d. in 1780, cost 24s. in 1800.

Those who profited by the Enclosure Acts were naturally convinced that the process 'made very little difference to the poor,

* He has a summary of Wychwood:

	Acres.	*Rods.*	*Poles.*
King's coppices	1,649	2	10
Duke of Marlborough's or Baron's coppices	1,041	3	17
Mr. Fettyplace's coppices	346	0	33
Keepers' lodges and lawns ..	134	0	23
Open forest	2,421	1	15
The Chase Woods	487	3	4
Blandford Park	639	2	17
Total	6,720	1	39

but not so much pilfering; far better for their morals; the people in a better situation from the enclosure,' etc.

The state of the poor was, however, very unsatisfactory, and the number of those in receipt of parish relief continually increased. In like manner the poor-rates also mounted. In 1776 the money raised by poor-rates in Oxfordshire was £31,154 12s. 7d.; in 1786 it had increased to £38,348 8s. 11d., but in 1803 it was £103,559 10s. 6d. The average poor-rate for 1803 taken all over the county was 4s. 8d. in the £, but at Bensington it was 8s., at Crowmarsh 7s., at Whitchurch 8s., at Witney 10s., and at Burford 10s. or 11s. At Bensington 'in the scarcity' it had once been 14s., at Chinner in the scarcity 14s., at Brightwell Baldwin 29s.; but the highest general average for the county seems to have been reached about 1820, when it touched 9s. The highest rate in England as a whole was raised in 1818, when with a population of 11,876,000 the rate amounted to £7,870,000, or 13s. 3d. per head. The average wage for labourers in Oxfordshire in 1800 was 9s. 6d. a week, but there were extra allowances for carters and shepherds, and for spring, hay, and harvest labour. The price of beef at the same period was 7½d. a pound, mutton 7d., bacon 1s., butter 1s. 3d., coals 1s. 3d. a cwt., and the quartern loaf 9d.

With the enclosure of so much common land, the countrymen grumbled that the open spaces which had served them for playgrounds and race-courses as well as pasturage were taken from them. The yearly race-meeting, which had been a feature of the life of almost every country town or big village, and in which gentle and simple had alike participated, fell into desuetude. The races were not of a very high class, and their extinction is perhaps not much to be deplored. Cock-fighting and bull-baiting were dying out at the end of the eighteenth century, and Dunkin, writing of that period, says: 'To the exertions of this Gentleman [John Coker, Esq.] great praise is due for putting an end to the inhuman practice of bull-baiting, which was formerly a prevalent amusement in Bicester. The writer when a boy saw with pleasure his determined and laudable conduct in rescuing a poor animal, destined to become the victim of this cruel sport, from a savage mob; and never since that time has the practice been attempted to be revived.' With the disafforestation of Wychwood passed away many of the old forest traditions and customs, among them that of Sunday shopping in Witney and Burford, and the great Whitsuntide revels on Shipton Down, when all the town of Burford marched up to the forest hostelry, called Capp's Lodge, and there elected a boy and girl as King and Queen of the

feasting, who demanded of the King's keepers a 'brace of best bucks, and a fawn with their horns and hoofs without fee or reward.' Capp's Lodge has passed away, too, and a farmhouse occupies its site, with just enough of sward and brushwood about it to recall the old forest. But it was once a notorious hostelry, to which it was said that even 'London bloods' constantly resorted for gaming and other unprofitable purposes. The circle of the cock-pit is still pointed out in the turf, and a little square building hard by is shown as the 'gambling-house' where, one morning, after playing and losing all night, Lord Sherborne was seized and bodily carried off to his carriage by his faithful serving-men just as he was about to stake his whole estate on a last throw.

They were wild times for lord and churl, and as a reminder, not two hundred yards from Capp's Lodge, stands Gibbet Tree, a great elm from a bough of which two brothers Dunsdon were hanged in 1784. Their initials and the date are carved on the tree-trunk, and can still be easily read. They belonged, it is said, to a famous gang of marauders who were the terror of the countryside, and once engaged in an attack on Tangley Manor House. Tangley is a small Elizabethan house, romantically situated (about two miles' distance from Capp's Lodge) in a wooded glen called Tangley Bushes. Its inmates were fore-warned of the attack, and had a *posse* of constables hidden in the house. After the family had ostensibly retired to rest, a small look-out shutter in the hall door was slid back, and a man's arm was seen inserted and feeling round for the bolt inside. The arm was seized by the constables, and the man, seeing himself a prisoner, cried to his comrades, 'Cut, cut!' So they lopped him with their swords at the shoulder, left his arm inside, and rode off with their maimed companion. In proof of which the opening in the door is shown unto this day.

The Church in Oxfordshire, as elsewhere, had fallen in the eighteenth century into a state of corruption or lethargy which was reflected in the apathy of the laity. She made no attempt to keep pace with growing populations in the more busy centres of England, and in country districts like Oxfordshire had lost to a large extent the sympathies of the people. Churches were in an ill-kept and often ruinous condition, services few; non-residence, pluralism, and often cruel disparities between the men who did the work and the men who drew the stipend, had a very prejudicial influence. John Bilstone, Curate of Chiselhampton, makes a curious entry in the parish register: 'Mem. March 20 $174\frac{4}{5}$. I enter this to acquaint my successors, that the stipend for Chiselton

and Stadham curacy was ever till this day, ten shillings a Sunday and a dinner for myself and care of my horse. But now Sir John D'Oiley being obliged to sell the Chiselton estate; in order to make more of it has refused to give any more than £20 a year, and obliges me to take care of myself and horse. This is Sir John's own declaration. This I attest to be literally true. JOHN BILSTONE Curate of Chiselton.'

In the register of Mixbury the Rector enters: 'On Sunday June 29 1766 not one farmer or family of this parish attended Divine Service,' and a later hand adds: 'Sorry to say it has happened several times since. November 1774.'

Pluralism reached an almost incredible development. So late as 1819 Mr. Richard Prettyman was appointed Rector of Middleton-Stoney, and at that time he had been already appointed (by his father, the Bishop of Lincoln) Warden of Mere Hospital (£1,200 per annum), Canon of Lincoln (£1,665 per annum), Precentor (£335 per annum), Rector of Walgrave (£1,000 per annum), Rector of Wroughton (£570 per annum). Middleton-Stoney was worth £436 per annum, and all these appointments, amounting to an aggregate of £4,006 per annum, he held till his death in 1866. His brother George was made by his episcopal father, Canon of Lincoln (£1,665), Chancellor of Lincoln (£535), Rector of Wheathampstead (£1,591), Rector of Chalfont (£804), Canon of Winchester (£642), and thus received an annual emolument of £5,237.

But a revival was at hand, and the new religious departure of the Methodists forced the Church to look to her ways. John Wesley went up to Christ Church in 1720, and was followed thither by his brother Charles in 1726. John's first sermon was preached on October 16, 1725, in the little church of South Leigh, near Witney, and an inscription on the oak pulpit there records the fact. An entry in his diary for Wednesday, October 16, 1771, says: 'I preached at South Lye. Here it was I preached my first sermon six and forty years ago. One man was in my present audience who heard it. Most of the rest have gone to their long home.'

George Whitefield was a servitor at Pembroke, and 'found the advantage of having been used to a public-house [his father kept an inn at Gloucester]. Many who could choose their servitor preferred him because of his diligent and alert attendance; and thus, by the help of the profits of the place, and some little presents made him by a kind-hearted tutor, he was enabled to live without being beholden to his relations for more than £24 in the course of three years. At first he was rendered uncomfortable

by the society into which he was thrown; he had several chamber-fellows who would fain have made him join in their riotous mode of life, and as he could only escape from their persecutions by sitting alone in his study he was sometimes benumbed with cold; but when they perceived the strength as well as the simplicity of his character they suffered him to take his own way in peace.'

It was his interest in a prisoner who had tried to commit suicide in Bocardo that first brought Whitefield into connection with the Wesleys. The little band of earnest men who set such store on visiting the sick, on weekly communion, on fixed hours of private devotion, on gatherings for reading of the New Testament, and on general soberness of life, were first christened at Oxford the Holy Club, and afterwards the Methodists, a name so soon to become one to conjure with. John Wesley was ordained by Potter, Bishop of Oxford, of whom he spoke with veneration and affection to the day of his death, calling him a 'great and good man.' 'These men,' said the Bishop on his side, 'are irregular, but they have done good, and I pray God to bless them.' The early tenets of these revivalists were soon entirely changed, and the movement, which owed nothing to Oxford influences, is not a subject for discussion here. It would be equally out of place at present to make more than the very briefest allusion to the Neo-Catholic Revival in the first half of the present century, though the latter undoubtedly drew its inspiration from Oxford sources. John Henry Newman was elected a Fellow of Oriel in 1823, at which time Keble and Pusey were already Fellows of the same college. The 'Christian Year,' which has been called the 'text-book of the movement,' appeared in 1827. In 1828 Pusey was elected Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church. In 1833 Newman, on his own responsibility, brought out the first 'Tract for the Times,' and in 1835 Pusey formally associated himself with the movement. By 1839 Newman's faith in Anglicanism had begun to be shaken, and in 1841 he published the famous Tract XC. 'for the purpose of showing that the Articles of the English Church were directed, not against the doctrines of the Church of Rome as interpreted by the Council of Trent, but against earlier heresies disavowed by that Council.' Thus he hoped to restore, in his own mind, to Anglicanism the prestige which she had lost in the course of his religious inquiries. On the publication of Tract XC. the storm broke; it 'was received with indignation throughout the country'; the Tracts came to a sudden end, Newman resigned St. Mary's in 1843, and on an October night in 1845 was received into the Roman communion by Father Dominic the Passionist, in the old minchery buildings of Little-

more. There is a curious parallelism between the Wesleyan and Neo-Catholic movements, one popular and progressive, the other scholarly and reactionary, and also between their founders, for as Wesley began as a High Churchman, so was Newman at first an Evangelical, acting as secretary to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and helping to start the *Record*. Like Wesley, Newman preached his first sermon at an obscure little Oxford village, Over Worton; and like Wesley he afterwards spoke kindly of his Bishop. Dr. Bagot was Bishop of Oxford from 1829 to 1845, and it was at his advice that the publication of the Tracts was stopped after No. XC. In his 'Apologia,' Newman, speaking of him, says: 'I was rewarded by having all my time for ecclesiastical superior, a man whom, had I a choice, I should have preferred out and out to any other Bishop on the bench, and for whose memory I have a special affection, Dr. Bagot, a man of noble mind, and as kind-hearted as he was noble. He ever sympathized with me in my trials which followed. May his name ever be blessed!'

It was in Dr. Bagot's day that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in rearranging the territorial jurisdiction of the Bishop, added to the Diocese of Oxford the whole counties of Berks and Bucks. The annexation of Berks Dr. Bagot accepted, but to add Bucks he said would make the diocese too large for him to properly supervise. So, though Berks was joined to the diocese of Oxford in 1836, Buckinghamshire was only actually annexed in 1845, when Bagot was translated to Bath and Wells, and Wilberforce became Bishop of Oxford. This inclusion of Berkshire in the diocese brought with it an accession of dignity. The Bishop of Salisbury had previously been Chancellor of the Order of the Garter, because St. George's, Windsor, was within his diocese; but on the transfer of Berks from Salisbury to Oxford, the chapel of the Knights fell under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Oxford, and Dr. Bagot accordingly became Chancellor of the Garter.

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUSION.

IT was only by slow degrees that a better understanding grew up between University and city, and it is only within the present generation that any consideration has been shown on the one side, or any real desire for harmony on the other. The traditional view which the University had taken of the townsmen was that the latter were a body of tradesmen who might or might not be respectable, but whose sole *raison d'être* was to minister to the wants of the University, and who were unworthy to associate with it except across the counter. One of the thorns that rankled in the city's side was that formal commemoration of St. Scholastica's Day (February 10), established 500 years previously after the sanguinary riot already described.* Part of the penalty meted out for the killing of those old gownsmen had been that the town should formally acknowledge its error, as on this day, by sending to St. Mary's Church 'the Mayor, Bailliffs, and 60 of the most substantial Burghers, who should there provide and attend a Mass for the souls of the clerks that had been killed in the riots, and offer at the altar one penny apiece.' In the abolition of the Mass at the Reformation the citizens had seen a glorious opportunity for abolishing also the function of St. Scholastica's Day; so they omitted it for fifteen years. But the University was not going to be deprived of its dues, and brought an action against the town, which resulted (1557) in a restoration of the church attendance and the payment of the pennies, only the Mass was changed into a Litany. In 1824 the city Corporation made a formal appeal to the University to forego the ceremony, and eventually it was agreed to substitute for it the taking of an oath once a year by the Corporation that they would observe all the privileges of the University. The oath in its turn became galling, and in 1859 the

* *Supra*, p. 95.

Corporation begged that it, too, should be done away. The University was wise enough to yield, but on the condition that the oath should once more be taken; and so in 1859 the humiliating function was solemnly gone through for the last time, and the long-drawn bitterness of St. Scholastica relegated to the limbo of archæology. The last overt evidence of animosity between University and town has passed away during the present generation, in the decadence and final suppression of the free fight between town and gown which took place in the Oxford streets every fifth of November. An olive branch was held out by the University in consenting to bear its fair share of the poor-rates in 1843; the University and city police were amalgamated in 1870, and a general interchange of amenities has taken place in late years. The *comble* was surely placed on the fair structure of amity by the conferring of the degree of M.A. upon the Mayor in 1897, the first time that any chief magistrate of Oxford had received a like honour. The city, too, in the same year aptly celebrated her elevation from the position of a Cinderella-like drudge to that of honourable sisterhood with the University by the erection of noble municipal buildings.

The character of Oxford has, in fact, become of late, either for better or worse, very much less one-sided than it was. Instead of being a University pure and simple, with just so much of town attached as was sufficient to minister to University wants, it has become to some extent a residential resort to which a great many are attracted who have no ostensible connection with the University at all. It is not wonderful that it should be so; the only cause for wonder is that the attractions of Oxford as a place of residence have not been earlier recognised. That it is the most beautiful city in the United Kingdom few unbiassed persons will be found to deny—many will say that it is the most beautiful in Europe—and when to its beauty are added its intellectual facilities, its easy distance from London, and the pleasant associations of young and healthy life, which have on most constitutions of themselves a rejuvenating influence, the great increase in its residential population is easily accounted for. In 1801 the population of the city was 12,279, in 1851 it was 27,843, and in 1891 it had increased to 45,742, and this not taking into account many houses which lie outside the technical boundaries, but form a real and integral part of the town. No very serious increase has taken place in any other of the Oxfordshire towns, and with the exception of Banbury they remain very much in the *status quo* of a century ago. The following table shows the variation of population in the chief Oxfordshire towns, and care has been taken to compare the same areas as far as possible:

	1801.	1811.	1821.	1831.	1841.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.
County of Oxford	111,977	120,376	138,224	153,526	163,127	170,363	170,944	177,975	179,559	185,669
City of Oxford	12,279	13,679	17,134	22,485	25,624	27,843	27,560	31,404	35,264	45,742
Bampton	1,003	1,232	1,460	1,605	1,604	1,684	1,713	1,615	1,395	1,346
Banbury (including Neithrop, Warkworth, Nethercote, Grimsbury)	4,070	4,421	5,673	6,427	7,308	8,765	10,316	11,726	12,072	12,768
Bicester	1,946	2,146	2,544	2,868	3,022	3,054	3,049	3,328	3,306	3,343
Burford	1,725	1,584	1,686	1,866	1,862	1,819	1,649	1,648	1,560	1,605
Chipping Norton (with Over-Norton)	2,200	2,331	2,640	2,637	3,031	3,368	3,510	4,092	4,607	4,546
Henley-on-Thames ...	2,948	3,117	3,509	3,618	3,622	3,733	3,676	3,736	4,601	5,288
Thame	2,293	2,328	2,479	2,885	3,060	3,259	3,245	3,229	3,267	3,334
Watlington	1,276	1,312	1,479	1,833	1,855	1,884	1,938	1,943	1,815	1,734
Witney	2,584	2,722	2,827	3,190	3,419	3,099	2,989	2,976	3,017	3,110
Woodstock	1,322	1,419	1,455	1,380	1,412	1,262	1,201	1,195	1,133	1,136

In the country villages the population has generally decreased. It is natural that it should be so. There was a great extinction of small freeholders at the time of the enclosure of the common lands, for the small owners could not stand their ground when their unlimited common rights were taken away. Their modest houses were divided and turned into cottages, and a very serious gap was made in the society of the village. In more modern days the high-water mark of village population seems to have been reached about 1860, but after the great agricultural *débacle* at the end of the seventies, there began a further elimination of the smaller farmers and occupiers. In most parishes the land has drifted into fewer and fewer hands; in many parishes there is only one tenant. The unprofitable nature of the corn crops, with the consequent laying down of pasture, and the extended use of machinery, have caused a great diminution in the requirement of labour; in many places half the cottages have become unoccupied, and in some of the villages population has decreased by 40 per cent. In places, the tale of struggling agriculture and dwindling population can be read easily enough in empty cottages and ruined cottages, and toothless gaps in the village street where cottages have been altogether cleared away, and in the curious absence of children.

Though the University reforms of the present century have been of the utmost importance, they are of too technical a nature to be discussed here; an excellent epitome of them may be found in the Hon. G. C. Brodrick's 'History of the University of Oxford.'* At the beginning of the century the Laudian system was played out. It speaks volumes, indeed, for the wisdom of its founder and for the complacent tolerance of Oxford that it should have been able for so long to satisfy the wants of the University; but its cardinal defect was that it provided no security for the capacity of examiners, or against their collusion with candidates, while these last were animated by little fear of rejection and no hope whatever of distinction.† In 1800 a statute was passed which aimed at remedying this. Examiners were to be elected in a responsible way, and were to be paid a fixed salary. Students were to be divided into two classes: those who sought only a 'pass' or qualifying degree, and those who aimed at distinction, and an enormous incentive to diligence was added by the publication of a list of the successful honour candidates in order of merit. These modifications, together with corollaries introduced in the thirty years following, had an excellent effect.

* 'Epochs of Church History.' Longmans, Green and Co.
† Brodrick, *u.s.*

Mathematics were made a distinct and separate branch of study, so that there were now two 'schools' instead of one in which a man might be examined, namely, Mathematics and Literæ Humaniores, which last included Classics, Philosophy, and History. Written papers superseded oral questions, examinations were held twice a year, and the honour list was divided into three classes. 'Responsions,' or a first and more elementary examination, had to be passed by students not later than the second year, and at the end of his fourth year the 'honour man' went in for the final examination on which depended his place in the class list.

In 1850 a new examination statute introduced further important changes. An intermediate examination between Responsions and Final Schools was established under the name of Moderations, and designed to be a special test of Latin and Greek scholarship. The number of final schools was at the same time increased, so that students might elect to be examined either in Literæ Humaniores, Mathematics, Divinity, Natural Science, Law, or Modern History.* In the same year (1850) was appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the 'state, discipline, studies, and revenues' of the University and colleges. Its inquiries and recommendations were far-reaching. The result was the Act of 1854, which 'wrought a profound and most beneficial reform in the whole spirit and working of the University system.' This is thus epitomized by Mr. Brodrick: 'The Hebdomadal Board was replaced by an elective council, on which heads of houses, professors, and resident Masters of Arts were equally represented. A new congregation was created embracing all resident members of Convocation, and soon became a vigorous deliberative assembly with the right of speaking in English. The monopoly of colleges was broken down, and an opening made for ulterior extension by the revival of private halls. The professoriate was considerably increased, reorganized, and reendowed by means of contributions from colleges. The colleges were emancipated from their medieval statutes, were invested with new constitutions, and acquired new legislative powers. The Fellowships were almost universally thrown open to merit, and the effect of this was not merely to provide ample rewards for the highest academical attainments, but to place the governing power within colleges in the hands of able men likely to promote further improvements. The number and value of scholarships was largely augmented, and many, though not all, of the restrictions upon them were abolished. The great mass of vexatious and

* The statute of 1850 grouped Law and History in one school.

obsolete oaths were swept away, and though candidates for the M.A. degree and persons elected to Fellowships were still required to make the old subscriptions and declarations, it was enacted that no religious test should be imposed at matriculation or on taking a bachelor's degree.'

This diminution of oaths and tests was completed by their total abolition some twenty years later, though it was only after a very long struggle and persistent opposition that the Abolition of University Tests Bill became law.

In the beginning of the seventies the question of University as distinct from college endowment came to the fore; it was considered that the professorial establishment and endowment were inadequate, and that the colleges should be laid under contribution to support professorships as distinct from college tutorships. With this object specially in view, a Parliamentary Commission with the widest powers was appointed in 1877, and one of the results of their deliberation was that the colleges were required to furnish an annual subsidy of £20,000 towards the maintenance of professorships. New professors were 'freely created, but attendance on their lectures was not made obligatory, and it has been found easier to provide them with salaries out of college revenues than to provide them with audiences at the expense of college lecturers.'

The other changes which were made at the same time completed to a great extent the gradual transformation which had been going on, and brought the University very much into its present-day condition. 'Close'* scholarships and Fellowships were flung open to free competition; the age of competitors for scholarships was fixed as under nineteen, the value of scholarships at a maximum of £80 per annum.† Fellowships were attached to college or University offices, and the comparatively small number of sinecure Fellowships which were allowed to remain were strictly limited both in duration and emoluments.

Another important change was introduced in the revival (in 1868) of the 'unattached student,' who was allowed to live in lodgings while going through his University course without being a member of any college or hall. He was, in fact, the old 'chamber-deken' who had been suppressed so long ago as 1420. The establishment of the unattached system was a direct effort to reduce the expense of a University education, and another attempt

* *I.e.*, scholarships and Fellowships restricted by founders to students from certain schools, towns, or counties. The system had fallen into great abuse.

† With some few exceptions, *e.g.*, Hertford College, which was founded too recently to come under the provisions of 1877.

in the same direction was made by the establishment of Keble College in 1868 to perpetuate the memory of the Rev. John Keble and to promote plain living and the doctrines of the Church of England.

Such attempts to economize must excite, of course, both snobbish prejudice, as well as some better-grounded apprehension, and the unattached system and Keble College met with both. The numbers of the unattached students, which at first increased rapidly, have recently shown a tendency to diminish, and an average of 275 unattached undergraduates in the years 1877-1882 has fallen to an average of 209 in the years 1892-1897. The success of Keble College has probably not been due to any slavish adherence to severe economy, and it is, indeed, a question how far the unlimited reduction of the expense of an Oxford education, and how far indefinite University extension, would be unmitigated boons. But this subject must be discussed elsewhere, as must also the interesting question of the effect the University has had upon the character of the Oxford native. No one can suppose that the expenditure of very large sums in a comparatively small place, and the continual spectacle of extravagant living, of the pursuit of sport and pleasure, can be without a real influence, and this may be traced, perhaps, most readily in the merry, courteous, pleasure-loving, if somewhat venal character of the Oxford population. They are pleasant and sympathetic people to meet with, and Plot's estimate may be safely endorsed. He found them, he says, 'of a very cheerful humor, affable and courteous in their Deportment: neither sparing nor profuse in their entertainments, but of a generous temper suitable to the sweet and healthful air they live in.'

A staggering blow to the clericalism of Oxford was struck by the removal of those provisions which required that Fellows or heads of colleges should be in Holy Orders. The situation was ripe for such a change, and immediate advantage was taken of it. In 1814 (the first year in which the Calendar distinguishes those in Orders) there were 322 clerical and 121 lay Fellows. In 1850 (just before the appointment of the first University Commission) the numbers of Fellows were, clerical 310, lay 156. In 1870 (when the results of the first Commission had been fully felt) there were 177 clerical and 187 lay Fellows. In 1897 there were 71 clerical and 220 lay Fellows. In 1898 a layman became Vice-Chancellor for the first time in the history of the University.

The result of this change has probably been beneficial, and the University is considered less narrow-minded and bigoted. Discordant Church parties do not air their differences so fiercely, and a very large proportion of the University look on such topics with

complaisant indifference. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive of any ecclesiastical or religious question exciting the same amount of interest in modern Oxford as did the Tractarian controversy in the past. Equally far-reaching has been that other great change which allowed Fellowships to be retained after marriage. Any discussion as to its influence on the intellectual life of the University would be very much out of place here; but a direct geographical effect may be noted in the wonderful growth of all that residential district on the north of Oxford called the Parks, the 'married quarters' of Oxford. It is natural that in the atmosphere of such Dons' families should be produced some of the finest intellectual raw material in England, and the children that go forth from these homes will have, no doubt, in time a leavening effect that will make itself widely felt. At the same time there are many who will say that the change must, sooner or later, destroy that selfish refinement that gave Oxford culture so characteristic a savour. The change is certainly sufficiently remarkable from the indolent culture and luxurious rooms and living of the old bachelor Fellow to the workaday life of the married Don.

It is unnecessary to speak at any length of the material improvements which the city has witnessed in the present century—of waterworks and gasworks, of sewage systems, of tramways and electric lighting. In these matters the place is now well abreast of the times, though, as a rule, even 'improvements' have only been introduced after serious reflection, for Oxford is nothing if not conservative. There was violent opposition to the Great Western Railway being brought to the town, and as a result the main line* was taken at a very safe distance, which afterwards proved a subject for much regret. There was equally bitter opposition to the introduction of tramways and the widening of Magdalen Bridge in the eighties, and to the electric-lighting scheme of the nineties. The intrinsic beauty of the place has proved far too strong, however, to be seriously affected by any such alterations.

If Oxford can boast that she kept the lamp of Gothic architecture burning with her long after it had gone out elsewhere, she may also boast that it was largely through her influence that that lamp was lit again. In Newman's Early English church at Littlemore may be seen the first-fruit of the Gothic revival, and it is certainly crude enough. There are, too, the ugly scars of the middle period, such as the new museum, the new buildings

* In 1844 the G.W.R. obtained powers for the construction of the Oxford and Birmingham line, and it was opened for traffic September 2, 1850.

at Christ Church and Merton, and the pile at the back of New College; but yet what town in the world can show so many or so beautiful recent Gothic or Renaissance buildings? The new work at Magdalen, Brasenose, St. John's, Mansfield, the new schools, the new Town Hall, the Boys' High School, and many churches and private houses, will occur to us, and the list is constantly extending. Critics will, of course, be found to carp at all of them, but the sane mind will rejoice in their goodness, and be thankful that the *genius loci* has proved strong enough to keep from serious falling in Oxford the feet of so many and so different builders.

Let us close the chapter with the words of one who long ago 'liked the place well.' It was Queen Elizabeth, who was leaving Oxford in 1592. She was an older woman then, fretful and irritable; and her second visit had not been so brilliant a success, perhaps, as was her first, years before, when she was in the heyday of life and power. Yet, when the cavalcade had climbed Headington, and the University officials stood grouped round her to bid her godspeed before she went down the hill to Wheatley and Rycote, she had her coach turned towards the city lying in the plain below, and, taking her last look at its spires and towers, said: 'FAREWELL, FAREWELL, DEAR OXFORD; GOD BLESS THEE, AND INCREASE THY SONS IN NUMBER, HOLINESS AND VIRTUE.'

INDEX

Abingdon, 54, 58, 62, 68
Akeman Street, 23, 24
  decay of, 38
Alchester, 24, 25, 33
  decay of, 37
Aldrich, Dr., 289
Alehouses, Oxford, 270
Alfred, 40, 41
Alien priories, 121
Alkerton, 117
Ambrosius Aurelianus, 34, 35
Anne, Queen, 283
'Antonine Itinerary,' 22, 23
Aristotle, 125, 139
Ashdown, 39, 41, 45
Assizes, system of, 71
Asthall Barrow, 13
Atrebates, 10, 12, 17, 20
Aulus Plautius, 19-21

Bacon, Roger, 85, 86
Bagot, Dr., 312
Bampton, 102, 217, 218
Banbury, 217
  during civil wars, 228, 242, 243, 245, 246, 248
Barrows, 7, 8, 10
Bayworth, 282
Beaumont Palace, 63, 76, 88, 104, 117, 119
Becket, 71-73
  windows, 163
Bells, Oxford, 174, 291
Bell-founding, 218
Birinus, 50
Bishops, burning of the, 179-186
Bishops of Oxford, 169-171, 253, 312
Black Death, 118
Blandy, Mary, 303
Blanket-weaving, 218, 219
Blenheim, 293
Bletchingdon, 233, 234
Boarstall, 116, 246, 247
Bocardo, 179, 183
Bodleian, 212, 213
Bodley, Sir Thomas, 212, 213
Brill, the, 224
Britons, 3-38
Broughton Castle, 116, 222
  Roundheads at, 223, 228
Burford, battle at, 39
  heretics, 148, 149
  bell-founding, 218
  mentioned, 170, 240, 251, 252
  Cromwell at, 263, 264
  William III. at, 280
  Priory, 299, 300
  neighbourhood, 308, 309

Cæsar, Julius, 18
  Claudius, 18
Cæsar's 'Commentaries,' 7, 9
Camden referred to, 25
Campian, 179, 186, 200-202
Camville, de, 78, 81
Canal, Oxfordshire, 304
Canditch, 186
Capp's Lodge, 309
Carfax, 58
Cassiterides, 5
Cassivelaunus, 18
Castles, 66, 70, 71
Catuvelauni, 9, 10, 17, 18
Chalgrove Field, 237
Chancellor, University, 91, 92
  his jurisdiction, 94, 96, 120, 145, 146
Charles I. at Edgcot, 225
  at Edgehill, 226
  at Oxford, 228-245
Charles II., 268, 271
  at Oxford, 272, 273

Chaucer, 112
Chedworth, Roman villa at, 34, 36
Chiltern Hills, 3, 35, 113
Chiltern Hundreds, 113, 302
Chinnor, 116, 294
Christianity among Britons, 37
Chronicles, Anglo-Saxon, 42, 69
  monastic, 69
Church, civilizing influence of, 49
  Oxford houses, 60
  courts, 72
  property confiscated, 104, 121, 148, 150, 156-169
  apathy of, 309, 310
Churches, Norman, 59
  decorated, 114
Cirencester, 8, 20, 23, 34, 35
  Richard of, 25, 26
Civil War, 222, 224
  Oxford during, 228-248 [254
  Churches and clergy during, 251-
Civilization, early British, 4-9
Coaches, Oxfordshire, 301, 302
Coffee-houses, Oxford, 270
Cogges, 115, 121
Coinage, early British, 9, 18
Coins, Roman, 26, 29
'Cold Harbour,' 38
Cole, Dr., 184, 185
Common-land, 305-308
Compton, Sir W., 245, 246
Compton Winyate, 224
Cranmer, 172, 179-186
Cromwell, Oliver, 233, 234
  at Burford, 263, 264
  at Oxford, 265, 266
Cropredy Bridge, 242
Cuddesdon, 171, 250
Cumnor, 193, 194
Cwichelmslœwe, 10, 20, 45

Danes, 40-47
Deddington Castle, 104
  Church, 232
  Charles I. at, 242
Ditchley, 205, 206
D'Ivry, Roger, 55, 60
Dobuni, 8-10, 20
D'Oily, Robert, 53-55, 60
  the younger, 67, 68
Domesday Book, 56-68, 60, 61, 65
Dorchester, earthworks, 11
  Romans at, 25, 34
  bishopric at, 50
    transferred to Lincoln, 64
  Austin Canons at, 69
  Beauforest, 164
  school at, 296
Dormer family, 297
Douay, 199, 200
Duelling, 271, 272
Durham, 137, 176

Earthworks, 10-14
Edgcot, 225, 226
Edgehill, 12
  battle of, 226-228
Edward the Black Prince, 117
Edward the Confessor, 47, 48, 61
Edward III., 117, 118
Edward IV., 130, 131
Edward VI., 161, 172
Elizabeth and the See of Oxford, 170, 171
  a prisoner, 177, 187, 188
  at Oxford, 189-192
  at Woodstock, 205
Emm's Ditch, 13
Enstone, 229
Essex, Earl of, 225, 241
Ethelred, 44-46, 48
Ewelme, 132, 134
Eynsham Abbey, 59, 60, 68, 150, 156, 167

Falkland, Lord, 240
Farmer, Anthony, 276, 277
Fell, Dr., 256, 257
Fellowships, 318-320
Fermor, 298
Fettiplace, 295, 296
Fiennes, Colonel, 242, 243
Finch, Leopold, 275
Fish as diet, 183
Fox, Bishop, 142, 143
Friars, Black, 83
  Grey, 84-87
  White, 87, 88
  remarks on, 88, 89, 108
Fritwell, 298

Godstow, 69
  Rosamund at, 74
  Abbess of, 156-159
Gothic architecture at Oxford, 209, 210, 320, 321
Great Tew, 240
Great Tom, 174, 291
Greek, study of, 138, 142, 143
Greeks at Oxford, 288
Grimsdikes, 13, 35
Grocyn, William, 138, 141

'Halls' at Oxford, 98
Hampden, John, 237, 238
Handel, 291, 292
Hearne, Thomas, 290-292
Henley, 218, 249, 303
Henrietta, Queen, 235, 245
Henry I., 62, 63, 65

Henry II., 70-75
Henry III., 81, 89
Henry IV., 119, 120
Henry VII., 143
Henry VIII., 146, 151-169
Heraldic visitations, 195-199, 220
Heretics, 148-150
'High Church' party at Oxford, 207, 208, 214
Highwaymen, 302
Hill-forts, 10-12
Hough, Dr., 277-280
Humphrey, Duke, 128, 129

Icknield Way, 10, 26
Islip, 48, 234

Jacobites, 283-287
James I., 205, 206
James II., 274-280
Jesuits, 199-203
Jews, 75
John, 80

Kineton, 225, 226

Langley, 80, 81, 130, 135
Latimer, 179-182
Latin at the University, 93, 261, 262
Laud, William, 214-216, 229
Launton, 253
Leicester, Earl of, 189, 192-195, 207
'Levellers,' 263, 264
Libraries at Oxford, 128, 129, 212, 213
Linacre, Thomas, 138
Lincoln, 60
  Diocese of, 64, 65, 168
  Bishops of, 69, 74, 86, 92, 135
Lollards, 107-110
London, Dr., 157-159, 169
Long Compton, 15

Mary, 174, 175, 186
Maud, 67
Mazes, 73
Merchant Taylors' School, 178
Mercia, 38-43, 47
Merton, Walter de, 99, 100
Middleton Stoney, 162
Migrations from Oxford, 94, 97, 98
Minster Lovel, 131, 132, 295
Mixbury, 79
Monastic spoil, 159-166
Monks, outcast, 166, 167
'Movement,' Oxford, 311, 312
Murders, Oxfordshire, 302, 303

New schools, 213
Newman, Cardinal, 311, 312
Normans, 52-61
Northampton, Earl of, 223, 239, 240
Northleigh, Roman villa at, 27, 34, 36

Organs, college, 261, 266, 268
Osney Abbey founded, 68, 69
  suppressed, 156, 168, 169
Otmoor, 3, 25, 114, 216, 306, 307
Oxford, Romans at, 22
  Saxons at, 36, 39
  Alfred at, 41
  Danes at, 41, 42, 44
  origin of name, 42
  castle at, 43, 54, 58
  sacked, 45
  councils at, 46-48, 75, 78
  Normans at, 52, 53, 56
  extent of, 57, 58, 120
  churches, 59
  houses, 60
  Stephen at, 66, 67
  charter, 76
  fire, 80
  Parliaments at, 81, 82, 112, 228, 231, 272, 273
  Jewish riots at, 82
  origin of University, 41, 63, 90-93
  'town and gown' rows, 93-97, 145, 146, 313, 314
  migrations from, 94, 97, 98
  halls at, 98, 123, 124
  medieval university, 122-129
  'schools' at, 128, 213
  Edward IV. at, 130
  Richard III. at, 131
  press at, 139-141
  Renaissance at, 138-143
  Henry VII. at, 143
  pestilence at, 118, 119, 144, 145, 234
  Wolsey at, 145-151
  suppression, 159, 160
  bishopric, 168, 312
  Bishops of, 169-171, 253, 312
  in Mary's reign, 175
  burning of Bishops, 179-186
  Elizabeth at, 189-192
  arms of, 78, 196, 197
  under Elizabeth, 207
  High Church *v.* Puritans, 207, 208
  Gothic architecture at, 209, 210, 320, 321
  libraries at, 128, 129, 212, 213
  professorships at, 214
  a Royalist centre, 224
  Charles I. at, 228-245
  fortifications, 230, 264, 265
  college plate, 232
  surrenders, 247, 248

Oxford under Commonwealth, 255-268
'visitors' at, 256-260, 262, 263, 268
Cromwell at, 265, 266
Restoration, 268
under Charles II., 270-273
plays at, 190, 192, 271
Charles II. at, 272, 273
Papists at, 273-280
James II. at, 278
William III. at, 281
Anne at, 283
Jacobites at, 283-287
election, 286
Greeks at, 288
Handel at, 291, 292
religious movements, 310-312
modern, 314-321
Colleges:
All Souls, 136
Brasenose, 98, 143
Christ Church, 147
Henry VIII. at, 151, 168
play at, 190
Charles I. at, 228, 229
Corpus Christi, 142, 143
Jesus, 208
Keble, 319
Lincoln, 135
Magdalen founded, 130, 131, 136, 137
mentioned, 144-146, 289
Fellows of, 276-280
Merton, 99, 100, 260
Queens at, 235, 272
New, 105-107
Oriel, 104, 109
Pembroke, 211
Queen's, 105, 289
St. John's, 177-179
Laud at, 216, 228, 229
Trinity, 175-177, 236, 289
Wadham, 208-210, 259
Worcester, 287, 288
Churches:
St. Frideswide, 44, 45, 59, 60, 68
founded, 51
dissolved, 150, 168
St. Martin, 58, 59
St. Mary Magdalene, 55, 59
St. Mary the Virgin, 58, 101, 143, 235
Bishops at, 180, 182, 184
Elizabeth at, 191, 192
image at, 215, 230, 268
St. Michael, 55, 59, 151
St. Peter, 55, 59
Oxfordshire, 1, 2
in early times, 7-16
Saxons in, 36, 39, 40
Oxfordshire, Danes in, 45
Christianity in, 50
Normans in, 53
churches, 59, 65, 114, 156
woods, 2, 3, 8, 62, 113, 216, 251, 307
religious houses, 69, 78, 155
castles, 66, 70, 71, 115, 116
families, 77, 220
members, 111
thirteenth-century towns, 112
houses, 115, 116, 293-300
heretics, 148-150
hospitals, 155
suppression in, 156-169
riots, 173
trees, 178
Elizabeth in, 188, 189
heraldic visitations of, 195-199
recusants, 203, 204
James I. in, 206
before Civil Wars, 216-221
schools, 220
Charles I. in, 225
havoc in, 248-253
Jacobitism in, 285, 286
in eighteenth century, 292-311
roads, 300-302
coaches, 301
highwaymen, 302
murders, 302, 303
canal, 304
decline of trade, 304, 305
common land, 305-308
poor, 308
Church in, 309-312
population, 314-316
Papists at Oxford, 273-280
Paris, University of, 91-93, 97
Parliament, members of, 111, 218
Pestilence at Oxford, 118, 119, 144, 145, 234
Phillis Court, 249, 250
Plate, college, 232
Plautius, Aulus, 19-21
Plays at Oxford, 190, 192, 271
Plot, Dr., referred to, 2, 10, 22, 178, 183, 216, 251, 293, 294
life of, 269, 270
Pluralism, 310
Poor, Oxfordshire, 308
Pope, Alexander, 294, 295
Pope, Sir Thomas, 175-177
Population, 8, 56, 314, 315
Port Meadow, 61, 231
Prayer-Book riots, 173
Press, University, 139-141
'Priests' Holes,' 201
Puritans, 207, 208

Quin, James, 266

Radcot Bridge, 119
Religious houses in Oxfordshire, 155
  suppression of, 104, 121, 148, 150, 156-169
Remigius, 64, 65
Renaissance, 138-143
Rewley, Abbey, 103
Richard I., 76-80
Ridley, 179-182
Rivers, Oxfordshire, 2
Roads, Oxfordshire, 300-302
Robsart, Amy, 192-194
Rollright Circle, 14, 15
Roman roads, 23
  stations, 25
  villas, 27-30, 34, 36
  coins, 26, 29
Roman Catholics, laws against, 199-204
Romans, 17-32
Rosamund, Fair, 73, 74
Rupert, Prince, 225, 226, 228
Rycote, Elizabeth at, 188, 191, 192
  Charles I. at, 228
  pulled down, 296, 297

Sacheverell, Dr., 284
Saxon Chronicle, 42
Saxons, 31-49
  antagonism to town life, 36, 37, 49
  West, 38, 50
Saye, Lord, 222, 223, 229
Scholastica's Day, St., 95, 96, 145, 313
'Schools,' 128, 213
Sherburn, 115, 116
Shifford, 41
Ship-money, 219
Shire names, 43
Silchester, 24, 25, 36, 37
Skinner, Bishop, 253
Stamford, 98
Stanton Harcourt, 134, 135, 294, 295
Statutes, University, 146, 172, 215, 262, 316
Stephen, 65-68
Stew-ponds, 183
Stonesfield, villa at, 27, 34, 36
Stonor House, 201
Strabo, 5
Studley, 157
Suffolk, Duke of, 132-134
Sweating sickness, 144
Swinbrook, 170, 295, 296

Tangley, 309
Templars, suppression of, 104
Tew, Great, 240
Thame, chapel at, 86
  mentioned, 160, 237
  in Civil War, 244-249
Thames, 183, 216, 217
Tin-mines, Cornish, 4-6
'Tokens,' 219
Tournaments, 79, 80
Trade, decline of, 304, 305
Tribes, British, 6, 7
'Trojans,' 142
Troy Farms, 73

Unattached students, 101, 318, 319
University of Oxford, its origin, 41, 63, 90-93
  'town and gown' rows, 93-97, 145, 146, 313, 314
  migrations from, 94, 97, 98
  numbers at, 96, 122, 143
  medieval, 122-129
  chest, 124
  terms at, 125
  studies at, 93, 125
  degrees at, 92, 125-127
  library, 128, 129, 212, 213
  Press, 139-141
  statutes, 146, 172, 215, 262, 316
  test, 207
  professorships, 214
  reforms at, 316-320

Vanbrugh, 293
'Visitors' at Oxford, 256-260, 262, 263, 268
Vives, Juan, 147

Wadham family, 208, 209
Waller, 241, 242
Wallingford, 2, 53, 58, 67, 237, 250
Warham, William, 145
Water-Eaton, 221
Waterperry, 164, 204
Waynflete, 130, 131, 136
Wesleys, 310, 311
Wessex, 39, 41, 44
'Whispering Knights,' 15
White, Sir Thomas, 177-179
Whitefield, George, 310, 311
William III., 280, 281
Williams, Lord, of Thame, 165, 181 184, 185
Windrush, 2
Witney mentioned, 13, 112
  members, 111
  'college' at, 144
  blanket-weaving, 218, 219
Wittenham Clumps, 11
Wolsey, 145-148, 150, 151

Wolvercote, 305
Wood, Anthony, quoted, 192-195, 198, 199, 231, 243-248, 252, 255, 270, 273, 274, 281, 282
Woods, Oxfordshire, 2, 3, 8, 62, 113, 216, 251, 307
Woodstock, 63, 64
  Becket at, 71, 72
  Rosamund at, 73, 74
  John at, 80
  members, 111
  Chaucer at, 112
  Elizabeth at, 188
  James I. at, 205
Woodstock, glove-making at, 218
  Charles I. at, 228, 235
  Commissioners at, 250, 251
  Anne, 283
  given to Marlborough, 292, 293
  decline of, 304
Wren, Sir Christopher, 259
Wychwood, 3, 24, 130, 307
Wyclif, 107-110
Wykeham, William of, 105-107

York, 56, 57

Zanchy, Jerome, 265

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